





3 122 00214 7925

923.1 D269s

D'Auvergne

Some left handed marriages

260891

JUN 15 1952

BOOK NO.

923.1 D269s

ACCESSION

260891



# DATE DUE

APR 20 1984	DO	
SFPL APR 21 '84		
SFPL DEC 26 '84		
SFPL JAN 13 '87		
SFPL JAN 25 '87		
SFPL MAY 21 '87		
SFPL JUL 8 '87		
SFPL DEC 1 - '87		
SFPL APR 14 '89		
201-6503		Printed in USA









Lady Waldegrave, Duchess of Gloucester.

*Frontispiece*

# SOME LEFT-HANDED MARRIAGES

Misalliances, Irregular and Secret Unions  
OF ROYALTY

By  
EDMUND B. D'AUVERGNE

923.1  
D2695,

WITH 16 ILLUSTRATIONS

1926

HUTCHINSON & CO. (Publishers), LTD.,  
PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON.

923.1  
D2692  
260891

## PREFACE

THE nursery tales sometimes come true. Royalty have a glamour for most people, it has been asserted, because they seem to those outside the palaces to belong to fairyland, to lead the life which we imagine we should like to lead. And Cinderella will always be a favourite heroine with children, of no matter what age, because her story teaches that chance may at any time lift a common mortal from the ash-pit and set her beside Prince Charming on his glittering throne.

The studies which make up this volume might indeed be called Cinderella in history. Unfortunately, however, the historian is not able to leave the oddly-mated couple at the church door with the comforting assurance that "they lived happily ever afterwards." For they seldom did.

Though not addressed to the serious student, this book has been compiled in accordance with scientific historical methods. Accuracy has not anywhere been sacrificed to obtain a mere picturesque effect. It may be classed as romantic history, but it remains history all the same.

EDMUND B. D'AUVERGNE.



## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE VAMPIRE WOMAN (PHILIP I AND BERTRADA DE MONTFORT) - - - - -	17 <i>from volume 1</i>
II. PHILIP AUGUSTUS AND AGNES OF MERAN - - - - -	33
III. PEDRO OF PORTUGAL AND INES DE CASTRO - - - - -	49
IV. THE PORTUGUESE LUCRETIA BORGIA - - - - -	62
V. A BAVARIAN TRAGEDY - - - - -	73
VI. THE KING OF FRANCE'S WIFE - - - - -	76
VII. A GERMAN MISALLIANCE - - - - -	86
VIII. THE NIGHT-TIME CZAR - - - - -	102
IX. THEIR ROYAL HIGHNESSES OF GLOUCESTER AND CUMBERLAND - - - - -	118
X. THE WIFE OF GEORGE IV - - - - -	130
XI. AUGUSTA, ELECTORAL PRINCESS OF HANOVER - - - - -	157
XII. THE FIRST AMERICAN PRINCESS - - - - -	171
XIII. THE EX-EMPRESS'S LOVER - - - - -	205
XIV. DUCHESS ERRANT - - - - -	217
XV. THE QUEEN OF SPAIN'S GUARDSMAN - - - - -	241
XVI. THE LAST ENGLISH PRETENDER - - - - -	253
XVII. LOVE AND THE CROWN IN OUR DAY - - - - -	273





## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Lady Waldegrave, Duchess of Gloucester	-	<i>Frontispiece</i>
		<i>Facing page</i>
Louis XIV	- - - - -	76
Madame de Maintenon	- - - - -	80
Eleonore d'Olbreuse	- - - - -	96
Elizabeth, Empress of Russia	- - - - -	112
William Henry, Duke of Gloucester	- - - - -	126
Mrs. Fitzherbert	- - - - -	144
Jerome Bonaparte, King of Westphalia	- - - - -	176
Elizabeth Patterson, Wife of Jerome Bonaparte	- - - - -	192
Empress Marie Louise	- - - - -	206
Count Neipperg, the husband of Empress Marie Louise		210
The Duchess of Berri	- - - - -	218
Charles Ferdinand, Duke of Berri	- - - - -	224
Maria Christina, Queen of Spain	- - - - -	242
Muñoz, Duke of Riansares	- - - - -	248
Princess Catherine Dolgoruky in 1879	- - - - -	276



**SOME LEFT-HANDED MARRIAGES**



# I

## THE VAMPIRE WOMAN (PHILIP I AND BERTRADA DE MONTFORT)

IN the last decade of the eleventh century, when the English were getting used to their Norman masters and pilgrims returning from the Holy Land were filling Europe with stories of the exactions and insolence of the Paynims, there was a king of France who carried off his vassal's wife. But no Iliad followed. The towers of Paris did not, like those of Troy, fall toppling to the ground. There was in those days a power very much mightier than the sword to which the vindication of Catholic morality was left.

He who played the Paris in this drama was Philip, first of his name, son of Henry I and great-grandson of Hugues Capet, the founder of the dynasty. He was a very tall man, that much was proved when they opened his tomb at St. Benoit sur Loire a hundred years ago, and in the dim candle light, saw a long form, swathed in rags, the body much fallen in, but the teeth white and well preserved. He grew fat and ungainly late in life, the chroniclers inform us, in consequence of his sensual and luxurious habits. He was surnamed the Amorous—escaping lightly in an age when people, with a disrespect which sounds incredible to us moderns, nicknamed even royalty, “the Fat,” “the Bald,” “the Short-Legged,” and “the Witless.” But you will hear no good of Philip or of the woman he loved in the chronicles. All the happenings of those days were recorded only by the clergy, with whom the Capetian king had the great misfortune to quarrel. As well might a politician of these days hope to be well spoken of if he had quarrelled with the London Press!

The Capets were always in trouble about their marriages. Eight hundred years ago, perhaps, they had not been kings long enough to submit gracefully to bonds imposed by the necessities of state. And like the Tudors and unlike the Stuarts, they were not content with having the women they loved for mistresses, but insisted on making them queens. There was Philip's grandfather, for instance, Robert, deservedly named the Pious. He put away his wife and married Bertha, widow of the Count of Blois. Whether his divorce was valid or invalid does not seem to have mattered, but it seemed that Bertha was his third or fourth cousin removed and that to make matters worse, he had been godfather to one of her children. To the Church in those days, the thing savoured of downright incest. Robert put up a stiff fight, but Rome was too strong for him. He had to give up Bertha and by way of penance, perhaps, married *en troisième nocess*, one of the worst viragoes known to history.

His own mother also set Philip a bad example. She was a Russian, variously called Anne or Agnes, the daughter of Yaroslave, grand prince of Kiev. Russia, it may be remarked, was in closer touch with the western powers in those far-off days than in times nearer our own. But Philip, I surmise, was the product of the first crossing of the French and Muscovite strains, as he appears also to have been the first westerner to bear the old Grecian name of Philip. His father, Henry, had died in 1060, when he was about eight years old, leaving him to the care of his mother and the regent, Baldwin, Count of Flanders. But within two years of her husband's death, the queen mother got herself married to Raoul de Crépy, the rich and powerful Count of Valois, "a noble and generous man." To clear the way, Raoul had accused his wife, Haquenez, of adultery and put her away, omitting to restore her fiefs and dowry. Great was the scandal. Philip, we are told, was greatly shocked. The ten-year-old boy, we imagine, probably resented his mother's presenting him with a new daddy. But Raoul quickly won his favour and continued

ever afterwards on the best terms with his royal stepson. Possibly the charges against the despoiled Haquenez were substantiated. At all events, Agnes lived and died the wife of her count unmolested by Court or Church.

With the youthful Philip we are not much concerned: Making due allowance for the bias of his biographers, I am afraid we must believe that he was ever prone to take that for which he had a fancy, regardless of the laws of God and man. Shortly after taking over the reins of government, in his fourteenth or fifteenth year, he made a sacrilegious attempt on the treasury of the abbey of St. Germain des Prés. His men had taken down a golden cross and were busy prising out the jewels with which it was studded, when a dense fog suddenly enwrapped the church. The blessed saints Vincent and Germanus had intervened, in response to the prayers of the monks, and the impious king and his myrmidons fled in terror. (Was this in fact anything more or less than an attempt to "levy execution" on goods belonging to the monks, in satisfaction of a claim for taxes?)

As a king, Philip is not highly thought of by modern historians, though he had at least two ideas which seem to me sound—he aimed at enlarging the actual royal domain, rather than emphasising his suzerainty over his powerful vassals, and in the growing power of Normandy he perceived a menace to France. The king of France in those days ruled directly only over the territory now included in the six or seven departments nearest Paris. Normandy—Flanders—Anjou—Aquitaine—Burgundy—Champagne—these were all vassal states owning only a nominal allegiance. Even in his actual realm, Philip could not always command obedience or protect his lieges from the robber barons who infested the country. Only towards the close of his reign, and mainly thanks to his son, Louis, did he succeed in enforcing his authority in the neighbourhood of Paris.

Judged even by eleventh-century standards, the king of the Franks was a poor sort of king. He had no particular



capital. With a small court he roved about his dominions, staying at each royal manor till supplies were exhausted and then moving on to another.

Philip was first married in or about his twenty-first year—rather late for his station and generation. The experience of his grandfather might have taught him that in this matter it is safer to trust the heart than the head. But reasons of state alone appear to have dictated this first disastrous union. He had been at war with the Count of Flanders, and to cement the peace that followed he married that formidable vassal's half-sister, Berthe of Holland.

This would have been about the year 1072. There is nothing to show that the marriage was more unhappy than state marriages always are, presumably. Though year after year went by without the Dutch queen producing an heir, Philip made no attempt to get rid of her on the familiar plea of barrenness. We may conclude, therefore, that he did not hate her. At last, thanks to the prayers of a saintly hermit, the queen bore a son, afterwards known as Louis le Gros. Philip was delighted and had the youngster crowned. This was no uncommon precaution at that time, designed to avoid any dispute as to the succession after the ruling monarch's demise. Berthe next had a daughter. Years went by. Then, when her eldest boy was twelve years old and she had been married over twenty years, Philip, now over forty, divorced her on some trumped-up plea of consanguinity and banished her to Montreuil in Ponthieu.

The real reason? The queen had grown too fat for his liking, says one annalist. He was fat himself, but this would be no answer to such a complaint. Possibly, seeing that the succession was now assured, he felt himself entitled to a change. But the most romantic reason has the support of most authorities. Philip put away the mother of his children because he was in love with another woman.

Enter the Helen of our truncated Iliad.

She was Bertrada de Montfort, a daughter of the famous



house which afterwards produced the slayer of the Albigenes and the champion of our English charter. "Of her," says Ordericus Vitalis severely, "nothing good can be said except ~~that~~ she was fair." But no more could be said in favour of her prototype, whose "face had launched a thousand ships and burned the topless towers of Ilion." The fame of her beauty seems to have been noised abroad, and before she was of marriageable age, excited the desires of men who could have seen her little or not at all.

Among these was the Count of Anjou, Fulk le Réchin, *i.e.* the Cross-faced or Black-visaged. He was a particularly bad specimen of the mediæval prince and had been excommunicated many years for his wickedness. The church's curse in this case was attended with a plague of bunions; but Fulk instead of accepting this painful visitation in a contrite spirit, devised a new form of shoe with long, broad, twisted points to conceal his deformity and strove to make other smart men imitate the fashion. Nothing that the impious count had so far done seems to have angered the clergy so much as this. Here, if any had been wanted, they said, was a further proof of the depravity of the age. For in the rogo's, it need hardly be explained, the degeneracy of the age was as popular a topic as it is now. Regretfully, good people looked back to the 900's, when men were men and women very different from what they saw around them! But these stern censors of public morals, the foremost of whom was Yves, bishop of Chartres, differed in one respect most surprisingly from the journalists and pulpiteers of our own day. It was not the modern girl, but the modern man who was the favourite subject of their lectures! Women were occasionally blamed for dyeing their hair and making up, but these were peccadilloes compared with men's disgusting practice of wearing their hair long. "The man who wears his hair like a woman," thundered his lordship of Chartres, "as good as tells his Creator that He did not know what He was about when He made him! Moreover, he forfeits that supremacy over

woman which is the right of the male sex." The sacrament of the altar was refused to men not properly clipped. Terrified, the offending gallants rushed off to the barber and had themselves as we should say "bobbed" incontinently. Well, well! Bishops were then as now, experts in morality, but to us it might seem that long-hairedness was not one of the most serious evils of the eleventh century.

Meantime, women continued to wear their hair flowing about their shoulders, or in two long plaits brought over between the breasts. They wore crowns or golden circlets, and one-piece close-fitting frocks, girdled about the hips, with long-sleeved overmantles. So you must picture Bertrada de Montfort when the rumour of her beauty reached Fulk le Réchin.

In the intervals of war and brigandage, the count, like the other princes of his time, had found time to get married to several wives. The first of whom there is any record was Hildegarde, daughter of Lancelin of Brittany; on her death Fulk espoused Ermengarde, the mother of his son Geoffroy Martel. Fulk seems to have been fond of Ermengarde, but the Pope declared his marriage with her null and void—why, we do not know. Perhaps his great-grandfather had been at one time affianced to her great-aunt or he might have sponsored her sister-in-law's child. There is talk of another wife besides these. "It is likewise probable," comments another authority "that he had also mistresses and concubines."

It is fair to conclude that Fulk's experience of conjugal life in all its varieties must have been happy since finding himself in 1089 momentarily at liberty, he cast eyes of desire upon the young Bertrada. When Duke Robert of Normandy (son of our William the Conqueror) asked him to suppress or rather, avert an outbreak at Le Mans, he saw his chance, and replied in these terms: "I am in love with Bertrada, daughter of Simon de Montfort, niece of William Count of Evreux, and at present the ward of his Countess Helvisa. Give her to me and I will faithfully perform all that you ask of me."

Duke Robert transmitted the lovesick count's demand to William of Evreux, who having debated the matter with his friends and kinsfolk, waited on the Duke and said, among other things : " This thing, my lord, is not free from difficulty. My niece, whose education has been entrusted to me by her father, is still too young to be wedded to a man who has already been twice married. Furthermore, it is plain that you are here seeking only your own interests, while still failing to do me justice. Now if I yield to you, you must return to me the fiefs which belonged to my uncle pleasantly named Raoul the Ass's Head, because of his big head and matted hair."

And as the Count of Evreux wished, so the good Duke willed. The bargain was struck. Count William got the Ass's-Head's fiefs ; Duke Robert kept his hold on Le Mans ; and Fulk le Réchin was rewarded with the hand of the lovely Bertrada. Everybody was pleased except perhaps the girl. The Count of Anjou, with his cross face and his bunions and his long matrimonial record, could hardly have proved an attractive partner. She bore him children, one of whom named, like himself, Fulk, succeeded him as count and became through his grandson, our Henry II, ancestor of the actual sovereigns of Britain.

Where, when and how did Bertrada first meet King Philip ? Most, though not all, chroniclers assert that it was for her sake that he divorced Queen Berthe. Presumably, therefore, they must have met before that was done. In the course of the king's ceaseless perambulations, they certainly might have met on the frontiers of France and Anjou, but I incline to assign their first meeting to a much earlier date. Her father's home was at Montfort l'Amaury, not far from Paris. Perhaps it was there that he first caught a glimpse of fine eyes and long tresses—a memory which left him no peace and caused him to turn eyes of loathing on his middle-aged wife. Indeed, it is not too bold a conjecture that her father, to save the girl from the clutches of the notoriously

lustful king, packed her off to his sister's in far Normandy. The report of her marriage with Le Réchin would have revived the king's desire, and to such a man as he, presented no obstacle.

This must remain a presumption, however probable. The chroniclers give no hint of a previous acquaintance between the lovers or suggest any premeditation. Says the compiler of the annals of St. Martin de Tours, writing in the thirteenth century, "It was on the eve of Pentecost (May 15th, 1092), in the church of St. John at Tours, while the canons were blessing the baptismal fonts, that Philip, King of France, carried off the wife of Fulk le Réchin, the sister of Amauri de Montfort." This can hardly be taken literally. Philip, if not religious, was unquestionably superstitious, and his youthful performances at St. Germain des Prés notwithstanding, would surely have shrunk from abducting another man's wife from before the very altar. It is easier to credit the following story :

"In those days," says Ordericus Vitalis, "a scandalous event convulsed the realm of France. The Countess of Anjou, Bertrada, fearing lest she might be treated by her husband like the other two wives he had had, and be repudiated by him like a vile courtesan—persuaded, too, that she was fair enough to please the king and noble enough to wear a crown—sent word and made known to him the love she bore him, preferring, she said, to abandon her husband to being abandoned by him and put to shame. The king was amenable to this declaration of a voluptuous woman. He consented to the crime and embraced her with rapture when she fled into France." Elsewhere we read: "The licentious King Philip came to Tours, and having held discourse with the wife of Fulk, resolved to make her his queen. The next night, this most wicked woman followed the King, who had left men-at-arms at Maindrai on the Beuvron to meet her and conduct her to Orleans."

The thing seems plain enough. A meeting at Tours—a



message from the King, "Have you forgotten me? I have put away my wife and will make you my queen"—a quick response from Bertrada, weary of her unlovely husband, dreading repudiation—a rendezvous at the church door—thence a flight into France to join her royal lover. And she took her eldest son and perhaps her other children with her.

That Fulk le Réchin was vexed we can well believe. He made, says Orderic, a great clamour and clashed his arms. But we do not hear that he called on his fellow-lords to avenge this insult upon the honour of French husbands. There was not much sense of humour in the eleventh century, but even to his contemporaries, Fulk can hardly have appeared a fitting champion of the sanctities of marriage. He was still excommunicate and was to remain so another two years. There was no fight.

In after years the rivals were reconciled by no other than Bertrada—"that vampire woman"—if so I may freely translate the chronicler's *versipellis*. It is clear that this shadowy Bertrada, "of whom nothing good could be said," was a woman of rare charm. She must have had great faith in herself or in her lover when she eloped over the border. Once Philip's mistress, she might have remained his mistress or something less. But he kept faith with her. Make her his queen, he would, though the greatest power in Christendom said nay. He knew the story of his grandfather Robert. Fifteen years before, the Emperor had been kept waiting abjectly in the snow at Canossa, craving pardon of the Pope. Philip and Bertrada knew what they had to face.

Who was to marry them? The King first of all made an effort to win over the formidable Bishop of Chartres, that staunch and embittered champion of the moral code. At this stage, the fact that Bertrada had been married to Fulk did not occasion much difficulty. People took her word for it that the Count of Anjou had not been properly divorced from Ermengarde. But Yves of Chartres expressed himself as doubtful about the King's divorce from Queen Berthe.

Hearing that His Majesty had evoked a council of bishops to legitimise his marriage with Bertrada, his lordship addressed a fiery letter to his brethren adjuring them not to be like dumb dogs unable to bark. Whereupon, the King clapped Yves into prison, where he was roughly treated by the Viscount of Chartres.

Philip got little satisfaction out of the council. But he had his way. They were married by Ursion, the Bishop of Senlis. But by now the scandal of the affair had reached to Rome. Pope Urban II wrote in October, 1092, to the Archbishop of Rheims, soundly rating him. "You are responsible for what has been done, for the Bishop of Senlis who, we are informed, has approved this open adultery by bestowing the nuptial benediction on this guilty pair, is your suffragan and subject to your jurisdiction. He is the more culpable since, according to the canons, he had no power to bestow the benediction on persons who had been previously married, even if they were legitimately free to contract matrimony." His Holiness then commanded the bishops to wait upon the King ("which they ought to have done already without waiting for his orders") and adjure him to return to the path of rectitude—"using to that end all charitable admonitions, prayers, reproaches, and even threats. If these" (proceeds the Pope) "are of no avail, we shall surely have recourse to our proper weapons, smiting the adulterers as Phincas smote the Midianites."

Thus began the struggle between the Supreme Pontiff and the King of France, personifying respectively Catholic morality and human affection. Philip refused, at the bishops' entreaty, to separate himself from Bertrada. Yves of Chartres, now released from prison, particularly busied himself with the affair. Fulk, by now, had complained to Rome and the bishop journeyed to the headquarters of Christendom to spur the Holy Father on to extremest measures. In Lent, 1094, he was back in France and refused to accompany Philip on an expedition against Normandy. "The Pope," he writes, "has

forbidden you the bed of this woman and has forbidden any bishop to crown her."

Bertrada had already borne her lover a son and must have become in consequence doubly anxious for the legitimisation of her position. The death of the divorced Queen Berthe now raised her hopes. As to her own marriage with Fulk, there were plenty of French bishops who would have been disposed, if let alone, to pronounce that invalid. Even Urban II might have reconsidered the matter but for the tireless zeal of Bishop Yves. The blow expected these two years fell at last. By a council held at Autun, Philip was excommunicated.

This was not the most effective or by any means the last sentence of the kind that was to be pronounced upon the obdurate lovers. From this point onwards, it is bewildering and tedious to follow the long struggle in all its stages and details. Philip after all was sovereign in France, Rome was a long way off, and there were bishops ready to suspend the sentence and to transmit vague promises of amendment to the Pope. In 1095 Urban himself came to France, to preside over the epoch-making council of Clermont. There the First Crusade was proclaimed; but time was found to renew the excommunication of the French King. Urban spent several months in France but had no converse with the recalcitrant monarch. Two years later the sentence of excommunication was enlarged into the dreaded interdict.

It is clear that all this time Philip commanded a certain amount of sympathy from his vassals, both spiritual and lay. This was actively demonstrated at Poitiers in the last year of the century, when the assembled bishops convened by the new Pope, Pascal II, made ready to launch a particularly terrible anathema against the King. The city was within the fiefs of William, Duke of Aquitaine, one of the most powerful vassals of the crown and one with whom Philip had taken care always to keep on good terms. What followed is variously

narrated (and always be it remembered, by scribes on the side of the spiritual power).

“So soon” (we read) “as the excommunication was promulgated, the Duke, a man of licentious life, apprehending no doubt that he would himself be presently chastised in the like manner for the like faults, transported with fury, gave orders to his men to maltreat and massacre the assembled clergy. His men were about to execute his cruel orders—you might have seen the bishops and abbots running hither and thither, seeking to hide themselves and save their temporal lives, when Bernal de Turon and Robert d’Arbrissel, who were of the council, accustomed to take the side of righteousness and to combat all iniquity, remained steadfast and of firm countenance, and proceeded with the process of excommunication, esteeming themselves happy to die if needs be for the cause of Christ and to endure insults for His sake.” For the cause of Christ, Who had refused to condemn the woman taken in adultery!

Duke William, by another account, broke into the church and declared that he would not suffer this high insult to his overlord. Whereupon the legate John, addressing him, said: “Herod beheaded John the Baptist for a similar act of duty. I am ready to undergo the same penalty.” Stretching forth his neck, he said “Strike! I am ready to die in the cause of truth!” The Duke did not strike, but strode out of the church and ordered the gates of the city to be shut, vowing that these arrogant churchmen should not lightly escape him. However, he seems to have changed his mind, and returning to the church, to have humbly craved forgiveness of the fathers. Yet another chronicler tells us that an affray actually took place within the sacred precincts and that an unfortunate clerk was killed by a stone heaved at a bishop.

The scene is one to impress the imagination. The dark interior of the church, filled with ecclesiastics in mitres and gorgeous vestments, holding their croziers; the terrifying



ceremony of the excommunication, the candles being extinguished, the curse being slowly and emphatically pronounced from the altar steps ; then the sudden irruption of armed men, headed by the duke, his helmet well down on his head, his nasal protecting his nose, his chain armour showing beneath his long surcoat (much as we see the Conqueror's knights in the tapestry of Bayeux), brandishing his long heavy sword. It is indeed easy to picture the bishops and abbots running hither and thither, as the scribe, with perhaps just a touch of malice, records—to imagine the clangour and clash of arms, the furious protests of the Gascon duke and the stern rejoinders and supernatural menaces of the papal legates, erect there on the chancel steps.

We do not hear that Philip's subjects considered themselves released from their allegiance by the interdict, as happened in some such cases. But if we are to credit our authorities, the curse made itself felt, as in the case of Fulk le Réchin, in more intimate ways. Philip instantly lost his kingly power of curing the king's evil. He became subject to boils and blains, toothaches and other pains. As soon as it was known that he and Bertrada were in the town, the churches were closed and all religious ceremonies ceased. Notwithstanding, a chaplain was found to celebrate mass in strict privacy for the guilty pair alone. Their departure was signalled by the ringing of the church bells. “*Ecoute ma belle, commentils nous chassent !*” the King is reported to have said with a bitter laugh. But Bertrada, refusing to be deprived of the comforts of religion, coming to Sens, sent her sergeants to break open the locked doors of a church and had the mass celebrated in her presence by a priest as lawless as herself.

Poor lovers ! Let us hope that their fondness consoled them in the midst of their spiritual desolation. Some sympathy they got, we have seen, from their contemporaries ; perhaps it troubled them not at all that there was none to state their case for posterity. The clerks, dipping their pens in gall and

venom, ascribed to Bertrada every odious quality. She is represented as the typical stepmother of the nursery drama, always contriving evil against the children of the woman whom she had supplanted. Yet she could hardly have hoped that her consort's eldest son would be passed over in favour of her own child, seeing that Prince Louis had now come to man's estate and had already been crowned at Rheims. It is related that when the young man was on a visit to the court of England, she forged Philip's hand and seal to a letter to King Henry, praying him to detain his guest and keep him a prisoner. The English king, puzzled and perturbed, showed this strange letter to an assembly of knights, who pronounced it to be a fraud. Louis was advised of this design upon him and upon his return reported it to his father, by whom Bertrada was severely scolded. At another time, we hear, Louis fell sick of some malady and could neither eat nor drink. The court doctors confessed themselves powerless. There then arrived a shaggy-bearded stranger who had studied medicine among the Saracens. In spite, we are told, of the French medical men, he restored the prince by means of a powerful potion, at the moment his life was despaired of. The mysterious illness was presently traced to poison administered by order of Bertrada. Taxed with her crime, she implored and received the prince's forgiveness, ever afterwards bearing herself humbly in his presence, like a trembling slave.

Still, chroniclers speak of her winning over the young man by her blandishments, which argues no ordinary degree of good-humour if she had actually sought his life. Later, came her amazing reconciliation of herself and Philip with her forsaken husband. Coming to Angers, the royal pair were greeted by Fulk with every manifestation of honour and friendliness. Bertrada did with her ex-husband as she willed ; she made him sit at her feet and got him and Philip to share the same room at night. It was his son by her (whom she seems to have kept with her all these years) that Fulk le Réchin made his heir, to the exclusion of his elder son. The latter

presently fell in an ambush, again we are asked to believe, by the contrivance of his stepmother and with the connivance of his own father.

Before this, in the year 1104, Philip and Bertrada, weary of the ban which hung over them, had made their only serious effort to part from each other. Perhaps by this time their passion had burned low and the glamour had departed from their relations. Possibly, like other folk similarly placed, they underrated the strength of those tendrils of affection which so often spring from the plant of carnal love. Or, the Bishop of Chartres may have been making himself particularly disagreeable. At all events, before a synod of bishops at Beaugency on the Loire—not far, therefore, from the scene of her elopement by night, ten years before—Philip and Bertrada vowed solemnly to renounce each other and to hold converse only in the presence of persons grave and non-suspect.

They came together again. Apparently they could not do without each other. Obviously the king and his leman were living still as man and wife. There were not wanting denunciations to Rome. But the Holy See seems to have tired of the affair. The persistence of these sinners had worn down the apostolic zeal. The last four years of Philip's reign, he and his much-loved consort lived together untroubled and reconciled to Mother Church. Both of them, as was then so often the way, strove to compound for their fault by an increasing piety and liberality towards the poor and the church. The King finding himself what was in those days an old man, tried but in vain to enter the Order of St. Benedict; and it was in the habit of that order that he died in 1108 in the castle, the ruins of which you may see at the pleasant town of Melun on the banks of the upper Seine.

He was buried, we know, in the Loire country, where he had won the woman he always loved. For Bertrada no other refuge but the cloister offered; though her son, the Count of Anjou, might have welcomed her. She took the veil in the order of Fontevrault, a community, I think, which followed

the rule of St. Benedict. Exclaims an English chronicler, William of Malmesbury: "How lovely and meritorious was she in retiring thus into religious sanctity in the flower and vigour of her age and beauty, with brows still unwrinkled ! But the delicate body of this woman could not long support the austerities of the religious life." She died, indeed, somewhere about 1115 at the priory of Haute Bruyère, in the diocese of Chartres, which she had founded and endowed.

Her sons by Philip, Philip and Florus, went to live with their mother's kinsfolk near Evreux. It is to be supposed that Bertrada had seen to it that they were well provided for. She had a daughter by the King also, who became the wife of Tancred, Prince of Antioch. Through Fulk of Anjou she was the great-grandmother of our Henry II, and so an ancestress of the present sovereigns of Great Britain.

[The descent is traced as follows: Bertrada de Montfort, Fulk of Anjou, Geoffrey of Anjou, Henry II, John, Henry III, Edward I, Edward II, Edward III, Edmund Duke of York, Richard Earl of Cambridge, Richard Duke of York, Edward IV, Elizabeth of York (married Henry VII), Margaret Tudor (married James IV of Scotland), James V of Scotland, Mary Stuart, James I, Elizabeth (married Elector Palatine), Sophia (married Elector of Hanover), George I, George II, Frederick Prince of Wales, George III, Duke of Kent, Victoria, Edward VII, George V.]



## II

### PHILIP AUGUSTUS AND AGNES OF MERAN

JUST a hundred years later, the drama of Philip the Amorous and Bertrada was re-enacted by his great-grandson, Philip Augustus. The latter story is, I suppose, rather better known. It is the subject of a long-forgotten novel by that prolific and most romantic writer, G. P. R. James—which began, I have no doubt, somewhat after this way: "Towards the close of the twelfth century, a solitary horseman might have been seen," etc. If the horseman in this case was Philip Augustus, he was deserving of our interest but not of our sympathy. He was not one of the half-dozen really good men of whom there is any record in political history. He was one of France's greatest kings, but in many respects a despicable character—even judged by the standards of his own time. He left Richard Cœur-de-Lion to sustain the cause of the Cross almost single-handed in Palestine, and, having sworn to respect that king's French possessions, promptly attacked and overran them upon his return to France. In comparison with this act of perfidy, the first Philip's deeds of brigandage appear as peccadilloes.

It was after his treacherous abandonment of the Crusade that the King looked about him for a second wife. His first queen, Isabeau of Hainaut, whom he had once threatened to repudiate, died in 1190. Louis, his son by her, was sickly. Philip Augustus wanted an heir in reserve; moreover, as one chronicler informs us, being too closely pried upon by the churchmen, he was not so free as he could have wished to

indulge his appetites outside marriage. He was at this time approaching thirty, a tall, vigorous man, of pleasing countenance but rough manners. Just then he was meditating a descent upon England. Somewhere he had learned that the descendant of King Canute still cherished claims upon that kingdom. In those days, too, the Danes possessed a fleet which might be very useful to France. Enquiries were set on foot. Denmark was then ruled by Knut VI, a pious prince "not given to whispering or fun during Mass, as some were wont, but holding his eyes fixed in meditation on his psalter or hymn-book." He had a sister, Ingeborg, then aged eighteen. The Bishop of Hamburg described her in a letter to Philip in the most enthusiastic terms. She had long fair tresses and hands of exceeding whiteness. The monk who compiled the chronicle of St. Denis also insists upon her beauty.

She seemed to the King of France the wife he wanted. Etienne, the Bishop of Noyon, the Comte de Nevers, and others were despatched with proposals of marriage to the Danish court. Arriving in the light of torches at Roskilde, they were royally received, but when concrete proposals for joining Philip in an expedition against England were laid before him, King Knut shook his head. The envoys, as an alternative, asked for a dowry of ten thousand marks silver. It seemed a big price to pay for calling the King of France his brother-in-law; Knut hesitated, but he yielded at last, upon its being suggested that French support might be available in case he was attacked by Germany. But France, he shrewdly argued, was a long way off. He stipulated that a number of French lords and knights should be left behind as hostages, lest his royal cousin should change his mind and throw his sister back on his hands.

This being agreed to, the Princess Ingeborg set forth on her long journey, escorted by the Bishop of Noyon, together with those of the embassy who were free to depart, and by a train of Danish knights. It is to be inferred that she travelled overland, through Northern Germany and Flanders. Philip

Augustus, impatient for a sight of her, met her at Arras. The town was so full with the multitude, eager to see the new queen, that the Bishop of Tournai had begged a friend, as we know from his letter, to secure him a lodging beforehand.

The princess made a good impression, riding a white palfrey, her long hair flowing, attended by her fair-haired ladies. But bride and bridegroom had nothing to say to each other, for the reason that neither could speak a word of the other's language. The bridal cavalcade proceeded to Amiens, where the marriage took place on August 14th, 1193.

Never were a bride's hopes dashed more quickly than Ingeborg's. The very next day, at the ceremony of her coronation as Queen of France, it was remarked that the King shrank from her and turned upon her eyes of wonder and disgust. What had happened? The explanation, according to the monk of St. Denis, is simple enough. The devil was at work, and loving mischief for its own sake, like Shakespeare's impossible Don John, had blinded the King to his new wife's beauty. At all events, His Majesty made haste to tell his people he would have none of her. She must go back to her brother. At last he consented to try another night with her, at St. Maur les Fossés. In the morning the nuptial chamber was invaded by a horde of lords and ladies, anxious to know the result. It is difficult for us now to imagine such a scene. The King, rising from the bed, declared that he had not been able to know the Queen *par amour et chair*—in the language of the divorce court, that it was impossible to consummate the marriage; Ingeborg, on the contrary—calling the matrons to her—protested that the King had had relations with her repeatedly. It was afterwards argued that these statements could be reconciled, the discussion which followed being worthy of the columns of a London Sunday newspaper. At this stage it is only fair to Philip Augustus to recall the precautions taken by the bride's brother, which do seem to imply that he had reason to anticipate what happened, either

because he knew her to be constitutionally "frigid" or to suffer from secret deformity. It is sufficiently remarkable that the precise particulars were not published in an age entirely ignorant of delicacy.

Unmindful of the story of his great-grandfather, or rightly esteeming himself a much more powerful sovereign than he, the French king roundly told the bishops that they must divorce him and that straightway. The Danish escort was invited to take their princess back home, and flatly refused. The churchmen got busy, eager at all cost to oblige their masterful monarch. Apparently they did not trust to his assurance that the marriage had not been and could not be consummated—they preferred to invoke the tiresomely familiar objection of consanguinity. As it seemed hopeless trying to establish the relationship of a descendant of King Canute and a descendant of Hugh Capet, it was decided to inquire into the pedigree of the King's late wife, Isabeau; and sure enough, an elaborate and almost certainly fictitious family tree was fabricated, showing that Ingeborg and Isabeau were both descended from Baldwin, Count of Flanders. This genealogical table, solemnly attested by seventy prelates and nobles, among whom was the Bishop of Noyon himself, was exhibited to a council held at Compiègne. The council knew better than to oppose the King's desires. Ingeborg was summoned; but as she did not understand a word of French or Latin and all her attendants had been dismissed, not a word was heard in her defence. On the ground that the two brides were related in the fourth degree, the marriage was solemnly annulled. On this being announced to Ingeborg through an interpreter (who might, one thinks, have been employed in her defence), the luckless girl burst into tears and strove desperately to express herself. "*Mala Francia! mala Francia!*" she exclaimed; and then brought out a word which had power to make the servile churchmen quake—"Roma! Roma!"

We hear so often of this plea of consanguinity, during



the Middle Ages, that it is worth while risking a headache to try and understand it. The intermarriage of uncle and niece was forbidden by the pagan Romans. The Christian emperor Theodosius with the approval of St. Augustine, extended the prohibition to second cousins. By the eighth century it had become doubtful whether marriage was lawful between persons related in the seventh degree. But this seems to have meant the seventh degree reckoning according to the old Roman law. In the eleventh century, Pope Alexander II adopted and enforced the existing Catholic system of computation, which is, that persons are remote from each other by as many degrees as they are remote from their common stock, the common stock not included. "In this way," continues my authority, "the degree of relationship was determined by the number of generations on one side only; while by the Roman civil law the number of degrees resulted from the sum of the generations on both sides. In the Roman system, first cousins would be in the fourth degree, while in the new computation they would be in the second." It seems doubtful whether the sixth or seventh degree was ever considered universally an absolute impediment. Finally, in the fourth Lateran Council (1215) and probably in consequence of the events which had passed in France, "Innocent III restricted consanguinity as a diriment impediment to the fourth degree"—that is to persons having the same great-great-grandparents. If this rule is still strictly applied, one wonders how the inhabitants of islands like Malta and the small Swiss cantons ever contrive to get married. In any case, it did not and could not apply in the case before us, *Rex v. Ingeborg*, since no consanguinity was alleged between the parties themselves.

From the human point of view, something might be urged in extenuation of Philip's conduct. He was not yet thirty; and any man might be appalled by the prospect of passing the next forty or fifty years with a woman for whom he had conceived an unconquerable physical repugnance. Possibly, he flattered himself that he was treating her better than his

own sister, Adela or Alix, had been treated by the King of England. That princess had been betrothed to the prince, afterwards Richard Cœur de Lion ; but before they could be married she was seized by Richard's father, Henry II, who would neither allow her to return to France nor join her affianced husband. Instead, he kept her for fourteen years a captive at Woodstock, forcing her, as was universally believed, to become one of his concubines.

Ingeborg, tenacious of her rights as a wife, stoutly refused to return to Denmark. Philip Augustus, alarmed by that wild cry "*Roma ! Roma !*" quickly showed the uglier and truer side of his nature. The helpless girl was hurried off to the confines of Flanders and imprisoned in the priory of Beaurepaire, near Cysoing, between Valenciennes and Douai. She was treated, all the chroniclers agree, with the most heartless severity. Doubtless the brutal king reckoned that the breed of Yves de Chartres was extinct—that no churchman in France would dare to oppose the will of his sovereign. He was soon undeceived.

The wronged imprisoned woman found a champion in Etienne, the Bishop of Tournai. In a long letter addressed to the Archbishop of Rheims, he paints her situation and appeals to his superior on her behalf : " There is in this country a jewel which men trample underfoot, which the angels prize, and which should grace the treasury of the King—I speak of the Queen imprisoned at Cysoing. . . . That man must have a heart hard as iron and bowels hard as a diamond who would not be touched at the sight of this young princess, so admirable for her virtues, so modest in her speech, so pious in her behaviour, thus poor and afflicted. Her face is not less fair than the Ambrosian Virgin's. She is not less beautiful than Helen, not less noble than Polyxena." (Ingeborg is then compared to her advantage with the less interesting ladies of the Old Testament.) " She occupies herself all day with prayer, reading and sewing. She plays no games of hazard, she does not play chess. This scion of kings and martyrs is forced for her

subsistence to sell or pawn the few clothes and effects remaining to her. She is obliged even to solicit alms and invokes benedictions on those who give. In you, my lord archbishop, she continues to place her trust."

Why she placed her trust in that dignitary is not explained. He did nothing to justify it. On the contrary, he seems to have shown the letter to the King, by whom Ingeborg was in consequence treated more rigorously than before.

But by now were heard the first distant rumblings of the storm which was to break over Philip's head. That frenzied, almost inarticulate cry had reached Rome. It had reached Roskilde also. An angry man was the King of Denmark. He imprisoned the French lords whom he had had the foresight to detain as hostages, and sent two bishops to the seat of Christendom to plead his sister's cause. To Rome went also the brave Bishop of Tournai, careless of his terrible lord's displeasure.

Celestine III, who then held St. Peter's keys, was aged and feeble, not the man, Philip assumed, to brave one of the most powerful kings in Europe. But the Pope, roused to indignation by the recital of what had been done in France, sent his legates, Cardinal Melior and the Archdeacon Censius, to warn His Majesty that the divorce was suspended and was now under consideration by him. Philip, who had got the Duke of Burgundy to seize and detain two of the King of Denmark's envoys, near Dijon, although they were under the Pope's protection, listened with furious impatience to the legates and told them to do their worst. They responded by summoning the bishops of France to a council. How greatly the royal power had gained on the spiritual was now manifest. The majority of the French hierarchy ignored the legate's summons, preferring to obey the king; those who did come dared not open their mouths, "remaining like dumb dogs, who dared not bark, fearing for their skins." But Philip Augustus was notified that the Supreme Pontiff, after deliberating the whole case and after a close examination of the genealogical table

prepared by the Bishop of Noyon, pronounced the divorce decreed by the French bishops null, void, and of no effect. Ingeborg of Denmark remained his wife and he was commanded to return to her.

Philip's answer was to busy himself with looking out for a new wife. It was no longer easy to find one. As Luchaire remarks, the experience of Ingeborg was not such as to tempt the most ambitious of women. Perhaps no princess had sufficient confidence in her own charms to be sure that the fastidious king would not reject her upon sight. The daughters of the King of Sicily and a Rhenish palatine in turn refused His Majesty's proposal. A third effort on his part was successful. At that time part of the country now called Tyrol was governed by the Duke of Meran, Berthold IV, who had been designated margrave or Marquis of Istria, in addition, by the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa in 1180. He had four daughters: one remained an abbess in her father's country; one, Gertrude, married Andrew II, King of Hungary; another, Hedviga, the Duke of Breslau; the fourth, Agnes, also called Maria by some chroniclers, was now allotted to the King of France.

One is inclined to wonder whether the girl before she left the kindly deep green valleys of her native land had any suspicion that the man to whom she was affianced was not in the eyes of the Universal Church free to marry her. Almost certainly she was not told. In expectation of her coming, Philip Augustus bestowed Ingeborg for greater safety in a cloister at Fervacques, near St. Quentin; then learning that the unhappy woman had made a friend of the Countess of Vermandois, the liege-lady of the district, again transported her to stricter custody at Soissons. Evidently he dreaded that she might be released by some sympathiser and might appear at the critical moment to forbid the banns.

Meanwhile, the unsuspecting Agnes journeyed towards France. Philip was holding a court at Compiègne to receive the homage of the Count of Flanders, a ceremony always



attended, when possible, with great pomp and splendour. The near approach of his promised bride must have excited him enormously. He had been told, no doubt, and very positively, that she was beautiful, but as much had been guaranteed of the detested Dane. But this time, his hopes, far from being disappointed, were exceeded. The King and his courtiers were dazzled by the loveliness of the South German girl. All the chroniclers praise her beauty. They speak of her golden hair, her white skin and her small feet. In that gay and martial assembly of the peers of France she was acclaimed the queen of beauty. Led to her tent by the most powerful king in Europe and reading the passion in his eyes, Agnes must have congratulated herself and looked forward to long and happy years. A few days after—this was in June, 1196—she was married to Philip Augustus, but by whom and by the authority of which prelate, I am unable to discover.

Of Agnes, like the woman beloved of Philip I, little can positively be said, except that she was beautiful; but she has fared better than Bertrada at the hands of history and tradition. Even the monkish scribes, while referring to her as the king's concubine or adulterine wife, impute no real evil to her. Her portrait has come down to us as that of a gentle smiling girl, very much in love with her formidable husband and loved by all who knew her. That she was no party to the persecution of her predecessor we may be sure; that her happiness was changed to dismay when she learned of that predecessor's existence and pretensions is an equally safe assumption.

The death of the aged pontiff Celestine had produced a lull in the brewing storm. Any hopes that Philip Augustus may have formed with regard to his successor were quickly dashed. Ingeborg's cries still pierced through her prison walls to Rome; and Innocent III, immediately after his election, gave ear to her complaint. To the French bishops he wrote: "The Holy See cannot leave a persecuted woman

without redress. God has imposed on us the task of leading the sinner back into the straight path and of chastising him with the penalties of the Church if he persists in his wrongdoing. The dignity of a king does not relieve him of the obligations incumbent on every Christian, and we are unable to make in this matter any distinction between a prince and any other of the faithful. If, contrary to our expectations, the King of France ignores our admonition, we shall be obliged with a heavy heart to raise against him our apostolic arm. Nothing shall turn us from our resolve to enforce justice." In another letter addressed to Philip himself, the Pope commands him to separate at once from his concubine Agnes and take back his lawful wife, Ingeborg of Denmark.

Philip Augustus had no thought of obeying. Agnes was very dear to him, and had borne him a child, a daughter. In the face of the Papal legate, Cardinal Peter, of Capua, he fiercely maintained that Agnes was his wife and that no one should come between them. One can imagine Agnes herself listening, trembling, behind the tapestries, to the altercation. Before the King's determination the Italian legate quailed. He sent to Rome for further orders. He was commanded to take the final step.

Another council was convened at Dijon. Such was the power of the King that many bishops disregarded the summons. The King's uncle, the Archbishop of Rheims, came indeed, but only to hold a watching brief for his nephew ; with him came the Archbishops of Lyon, Vienne and Besançon, eighteen bishops, and a number of mitred abbots. Two abbots were deputed to cite the King in person—but his men-at-arms drove them away from the precincts of the court. In spite, however, of the King's protests, the Legate, on December 6th, 1199, with all the awful ceremonial proscribed for such occasions, publicly announced that an interdict was laid on the whole realm of France till its king should renounce his adulterous intercourse with Agnes of Meran.

The ban took pretty general effect, although the bishops

within easy reach of Philip's strong arm found it prudent to suspend it, excusing their laxity to the Pope with the plea that the people would not submit to being deprived of their spiritual food. Indeed, it must have seemed hard to a hind in Picardy or Burgundy that he should be refused the sacrament or even denied the last consolations of religion because his mighty and inaccessible overlord had chosen to take two wives. Philip hit out savagely. Bishops who had enforced the interdict within their dioceses were maltreated and their temporalities confiscated. Everywhere within the French dominions the outraged Majesty of the Crown found forcible expression. On Ingeborg the hand of her husband weighed heavier than ever. She was confined in a fresh prison, three days' journey from Paris.

She was probably happier than Agnes. The Duke of Meran's daughter was certainly recognised as Queen of France and treated with due regard to her rank by all with whom the King allowed her to come in contact ; but she knew herself to be cut off from the Church and branded as a sinner before all Christendom. In the eyes of every matron she must have read a reproach, on the face of every man something like a leer. Emerge from the odious position into which she had been betrayed she could not, without acknowledging herself as adulteress and her child illegitimate. To the modern man and, I hope, to the modern woman, the attitude of Ingeborg seems less dignified and less deserving of sympathy. To force herself upon a man who loathes the sight of her, and to claim the title of his wife, argues a total absence of self-respect in any woman, unless there is a child's interest at stake ; but that was not the view of the twelfth century and perhaps it is not general in the twentieth.

To Philip Augustus personally, the anathema must have mattered little. He had broken the most sacred vows with impunity and laid hands on the Church's property without scruple. He had taken the Cross and then forsworn it—and was not even troubled, like his ancestor, with boils or

toothache, in consequence. Such a man as he, even the complainings of his subjects, sitting in spiritual darkness, would have moved but little. Capefigue, who embroiders his narrative freely with dramatic episodes and imaginary conversations, tells us that Agnes, with streaming eyes and between choking sobs, appealed to the Barons of France to stand by her ; more likely it was she who prevailed on her husband to seek some mode of reconciliation with the Church. Seeing that the thing had to be done, Philip Augustus, with characteristic craftiness, devised a means of saving his face. Turning in full council to his uncle, the Archbishop of Rheims, he asked : " Is it true, as the Lord Pope affirms, that the divorce pronounced by you was invalid and null ? " The Primate was obliged to confess this was so. " Then," said the King brutally, " you, my lord archbishop, are a fool not to know your own business ! " Thus feigning to have erred in good faith and through simplicity, Philip offered his submission to the Pope. On condition that the interdict was raised, he bound himself to submit the question of his divorce to an ecclesiastical tribunal, and to abide by its decision.

Innocent agreed, but with the further proviso that he should separate in the meantime from Agnes and take back Ingeborg. As the question of the King's marriage with the latter was still *sub judice*, this seems to be contrary to the maxim governing sex relations nowadays—when in doubt, abstain. Philip was of course in a mood to promise anything, confident in his ability to trick the priests and wriggle out of any undertakings. Cardinal Octavian, the new papal legate, found him living under the same roof with Ingeborg at the hunting lodge of St. Leger en Iveline, in the forest of Rambouillet. Philip swore to cohabit with her. Agnes he refused to expel from France, alleging with truth that she was pregnant and could not safely travel. He promised, however, not to " touch her flesh." With these engagements, and another to indemnify the despoiled clergy, the Cardinal had to be



content. The interdict was lifted on September 8th, 1200. A great sigh of relief went up from France.

In the following January, Agnes was delivered of her second child, a boy, who was named after his father. She lingered on in great agony of mind and physical prostration, cheered, we may safely conclude, by frequent visits from her lover. Meanwhile, Ingeborg was allowed to appear on public occasions as Queen of France.

The council which was supposed finally to determine the validity of the divorce came together at Soissons in May. Ingeborg was quartered at a convent in the town. Philip's case was ably stated before the assembled fathers, most of whom were anxious enough to please him; but the tide was turned by a clerk who seemed to have been "briefed" as we should say, at the last moment and pleaded so effectively against the divorce that the issue was no longer doubtful. Seeing that the final judgment would certainly be against him, Philip resorted to a dramatic *coup-de-théâtre* to avert it. Calling for Ingeborg at her quarters, he swung the astonished and terrified woman into the saddle before him and carried her off at full gallop to one of his residences. The assembled prelates were notified that His Majesty was now happily reconciled to his wife and that no reason remained for continuing their deliberations. The court broke up, the final judgment not having been pronounced. Thus, dryly observes a chronicler, was King Philip delivered from the hands of the Romans.

But within a very few weeks there was pronounced another sentence of divorce, against which no appeal could lie. A Cistercian abbot—our Essex annalist, Ralph of Coggeshall, informs us—had warned the King that if he did not give up his concubine, God would take her from him. Probably the seer had private advices from the Château of Poissy, where Agnes then lay, nursing her boy. The news of her lover's apparent reconciliation with the other woman, following upon the ordeal of her childbirth, hastened her end. She died about

the middle of July in the year 1201, in the arms, as I like to believe, of her lover. How old she was, we are nowhere told—not more than 25, we may safely conclude, since she had been married only five years.

She was the one woman, the only human being, perhaps, that the fierce, selfish King really loved. He buried her in the church of St. Corentin, at Mantes, and founded a convent of 120 nuns, who were to pray for the repose of her soul. To the last day of his stormy, busy life he cherished her memory; and for her sake he piously remembered her kinsfolk, commanding the chapter of St. Denis to commemorate with befitting ceremony the death-days of her mother, who had died before her, and of her father, the Duke, and her sister, Queen Gertrude of Hungary, who survived her three and twelve years respectively. On the news of her death, Innocent, at Philip's request, immediately and graciously legitimised her two children—an act for which Luchaire seems inclined to blame him rather than for levying an interdict on the unoffending subjects of the King.

France breathed more freely when the yellow-haired princess was dead. Now, thought everyone, the King will cleave to his lawful wife, there will be an end to interdicts and this interminable dispute with Rome. Such a hope partly inspired the Pope's act of grace towards the children of Agnes. But Philip Augustus hardened his heart. He might, one conjectures, have accepted Ingeborg as Queen had he been able to keep the woman he loved somewhere in the background as his wife. Recalling the Cistercian's warning, he would see here the hand of God snatching away his beloved in order to force him into the arms of his lawful wife. We do not hear that the Capetian King openly blasphemed or defied God, as the Plantagenets were wont to do on such occasions; but we can imagine such a man grimly resolving not to accommodate himself to the obvious designs of Providence.

As the slab of the tomb closed down upon Agnes of Meran for ever, so once more and for many years the doors of the

prison closed upon the woman who had most reason to wish her death. Ingeborg, whom we last heard of clutched before the King on his horse, writes in 1203 to the Pope from the castle of Étampes.

“ I am persecuted,” she writes, “ by my lord and husband, Philip, who not only refuses to treat me as his wife, but subjects me, through his myrmidons, to outrage and insult. In this prison I have no consolation, enduring continual and intolerable suffering. None dares to visit me, no priest is allowed to approach me with spiritual comfort. My countrymen are forbidden to bring me letters or to converse with me. I do not get enough food ; I am deprived of even medical necessities. My health is endangered because I cannot be cupped, and my condition grows graver. I want even for clothes and those which remain to me are unworthy of my station.”

Innocent, on receiving this appeal, protested in strongest terms to Philip Augustus. The King's answer was always in substance the same : “ Let Ingeborg consent to the divorce and she may return to Denmark.” He had humbled John of England, and had no temporal rivals to fear. Agnes was for ever lost to him—he was free to indulge his hate. As the years dragged on and Ingeborg aged in her prison, even the Pope grew weary of her obstinacy. He went so far as to hint that he would grant the divorce if the Queen would enter no appearance and let the judgment go by default. In vain ; the embittered, injured woman held by her rights, the more tenaciously that Philip was again reported to be looking out for another queen. He was refused this time by a Thuringian princess, although he promised to marry her upon her coming to France, so long as she was not so ugly as to scare him.

And in the end, Ingeborg's strange abject tenacity won.

In 1213, to everyone's astonishment, most of all her own, Ingeborg was taken out of prison and put in the dead Agnes's place. Poor woman, it is to be supposed that she felt none too secure there, especially when she learned the motive for her husband's change of attitude. The wheel of politics had

come round again, and now once more the King of France wanted the help of Denmark in an attack upon the English coast. That help was not given; but Ingeborg remained seated on the throne of France. Twenty years had passed since she married Philip; she had grown grey in prison, but he, too, was on the threshold of age. Their relations could hardly have been affectionate, but when the King died, at the town where he had loved Agnes, he bequeathed ten thousand pounds of Paris to "his beloved consort."

She lived fifteen years longer, respectfully treated by Louis VIII and Louis IX. Her widowhood, I doubt not, was the happiest stage of her frustrate life. The cloister had so often been her prison that a sort of nostalgia impelled her to visit nunneries and monasteries. She took her maids of honour, with the result, on one occasion at least, of a grave scandal and a severe disciplining of the frail monks. She died in July, 1237 or 1238; her bones remained in the church of the Hospitallers at Corbeil, till scattered by the Revolution. All that remains of her is a richly illuminated psalter, preserved at the Ecole des Chartes, in which it is touching to note, she inscribed the death-day of the Countess of Vermandois, one of the few friends she made in captivity.

She died barren, surviving by a couple of years, Philip the Hurepel, the son of Agnes of Meran,



III

PEDRO OF PORTUGAL AND INES DE CASTRO

THE history of Portugal reads like a romance. The (possibly fabulous) story of the battle of Ourique, where the first Portuguese king adopted the shields of the five slain Moorish princes as the arms of the new kingdom—the marvellous voyage of Vasco da Gama and his little ships into oceans never sailed before—the discovery of the passage to India, the heroic exploits of the Portuguese conquistadores on that coast—the further discoveries of Japan, of Australia and Brazil—the story of Don Sebastian pursuing his hunting foray into Morocco and disappearing for ever in that “dim weird battle in the west”—not least, the story I am about to relate—lend the history of this, one of the smallest countries of Europe, a glamour and an interest without parallel in post-classical times. The Portuguese of to-day do not hold their heads very high, yet, beside their national record, the chronicles of much more powerful nations read like the journal of a department store.

However, here I am concerned not with the heroic, but the sentimental (or, if you like, the scandalous) side of this great little people's story. The Portuguese, before they became great sailors, were great lovers. There was *Donha Branca*, the sister of good King *Dinis*, who was also the abbess of the mighty convent of *Las Huelgas*, notwithstanding which, she saw and loved a humble carpenter, *Pedro Esteves* by name, and bore him a son. Here is as romantic a tale as you could wish, but unfortunately I have ransacked the annals of

Portugal in vain for ampler details. Whether the abbess housed her humble lover in the nunnery or eloped with him to live as a working-man's wife, let us hope that the oddly-assorted pair lived happily ever after. Their son became Master of the knightly order of Calatrava and was in due course beheaded. King Dinis was a proper king, delighting in the songs of the troubadours, the arts of love, and the charms of woman. He was more or less illegitimate, as most kings of Portugal were in those days. His wife was a saint—St. Isabel of Portugal—who did good service in looking after his natural children and reconciling him with his heir, afterwards Dom Affonso IV.

Pedro, this Affonso's son, was born at Lisbon in April, 1320. Upon his father's accession to the throne, he was "married" by the Bishop of Coimbra to Donha Blanca, a Castillian princess. The bride and bridegroom at this time were eight years old. The consummation of their marriage was fixed with nicety for St. John's Eve, 1332, when the parties should have attained the ripe age of twelve. Meantime, the princess's trousseau was got ready and she was no doubt instructed in the language of her new country. But the little girl began to wither in the moist air of Portugal. She was, as we should say, in a decline. Her boy-husband, inspecting her about the time appointed for their real nuptials, would have none of her. He turned contemptuously away, dismissing her as a mere "bag of bones."

In the fourteenth century it was still as easy in the Catholic world to unmarry as to marry. King Affonso IV was himself descended from that Count of Boulogne who, on hearing that the crown of Portugal was at his disposal, promptly discarded his French bride and took another wife, without much fuss being made about it. So the ceremony performed by the Bishop of Coimbra was quashed, little Blanca was relegated to the sick room, and His Majesty cast a roving glance round the adjacent realms for another wife for his son.

A contemporary Portuguese writer, Figueiredo, gives us a



fairly detailed portrait of the prince as he was at this time, though he omits to state the source of his information. Pedro, then, we are to believe, was a stout youth, with a big head, high cheekbones, a prominent jaw, and a large mouth. He had large dark "Portuguese eyes," hairy wrists, and sturdy limbs. He had very little Latin and no Greek. The poesy and minstrelsy, even the courtly jousts and tourneys beloved of his grandfather, Dinis, appealed to him not at all. He delighted above all in the chase and falconry, in those sports, in fact, which are accounted in our own day to be the proper occupation and apprenticeship of an heir to the throne.

Hawking on the golden plains of Portugal and tracking the bears and wolves which still haunted her shaggy forests, he was in no mood to marry. But since marry he must, he besought his father to let him choose a wife for himself. But Affonso IV was a prince sad and serious, and unlike any other sovereign of his line, a staunch Puritan. There was no place for lust and little for love in his system. As bride for his son he selected an immensely wealthy heiress, Doña Constancia Manuel, daughter of the Duke of Penafiel, a close kinswoman of the King of Castille. But to this monarch (Alfonso XI) the match was for various reasons objectionable; and it was only after a desultory inglorious war that she was suffered to leave his dominions and to join the man to whom she was pledged. Poor Blanca was sent back to Castille about the same time, and finished her days in the great nunnery of Las Huelgas, near Burgos. "She chose a bridegroom," observes a pious Portuguese, "who never repudiates his bride."

Pedro and Constancia were married at the Sé, the old cathedral of Lisbon, in the August of 1339, the Infante being then nineteen years old, the princess not more than fifteen. In that age and clime, they were in all respects adults. In the dim light shed upon Constancia, she appears as a rather cold, proud, ambitious person, very much more a princess than a wife. Pedro, after the briefest interval, went on with

hunting, returning no doubt, only to snore by the great open fire, and paying little attention to his wife. She does not seem to have cared. She preferred, I imagine, the society of her dour father-in-law and of his mother, the sainted Isabel.

Also, by a not uncommon irony of fate, she was particularly fond of a certain lady-in-waiting whom she had brought with her from Castille. This was Inés de Castro (I spell her first name Portuguese fashion). She was the daughter of Don Pedro Fernandez de Castro, a distinguished noble of Galicia, by his mistress, a woman of the same province. The chroniclers have constructed various genealogies for her, but all agree that she was illegitimate, as the majority of well-bred people seem to have been in those days, while some allege she was remotely related to the royal house of Portugal, as again, a very great multitude of people must have been. We are again indebted to Senhor Figueirido for a well-sketched-in portrait. Donha Inés corresponded rather to modern standards of beauty than to the fourteenth century's. Her form seems to have been slim and boyish—she was thin, had a small bust, and long legs. Her hair, of a dull gold, was dressed close to her finely-moulded head. She possessed the white hands so much admired among a dark-skinned people, and remarkably enough, "green shy eyes." Her lips were always half parted in a pensive smile. "Collo de Garça," the courtiers called her, which means "heron's neck," reminding one of "swan-neck," the name bestowed on Harold Goodwin's mistress.

Beauty of this type was certainly not common among a people a third of whom must have had Moorish blood. The delicate charms of Inés, we can readily believe, blinded the Infante's eyes to the more exuberant good looks of his wife. This preference, it is asserted, showed itself soon after the marriage. If the Infanta knew of it, she did not at first resent it. Perhaps she placed faith in her particular friend's loyalty or virtue. She had, too, other grounds for confidence. Pedro, we read with some amusement, had pledged himself in the



Maria Christina, Queen of Spain.





marriage contract not to take a concubine unless his wife proved barren ; and Constanca was on the way to become a mother. The child when it came only survived his birth a few hours. It was Inés who was his godmother. Thus, what was considered in those days a spiritual affinity was created between the prince and the woman he loved, in addition to the remote kinship which already perhaps sundered them.

These barriers of honour and consanguinity were soon overleaped by Pedro's passion. In the year that elapsed between the birth of Constanca's first child and that of her second—afterwards King Fernando in 1345—Inés became his mistress. Fernão Lope primly supposes that she did not yield except upon a promise of marriage at some later date ; which, coming from a man whose wife was living, would not seem to moderns any extenuation of her conduct. She now accompanied the Infante everywhere. Few princes of that day would have made any secret of keeping a mistress, but Pedro knew the stern temper of his father, and tried to keep the affair from his knowledge. He did not succeed. Rumours reached the King, possibly by this time there were complaints by the Infanta herself. The prince was reminded of that stipulation in the marriage contract. His wife had borne an heir to the throne and was about to bear him a third. Inés was banished from the country. She took refuge across the border with her aunt, Doña Teresa de Albuquerque.

Not many months later, Constanca died at the age of twenty-one, giving birth to a daughter. Pedro at once called on his beloved to return to him. Since he established her at Coimbra, then the seat of the Court, it looks as though he did not fear his father's disapproval now he was a widower. For his mistress's bower he selected the convent of the Poor Clares, founded by his grandmother ! It seems a strange choice, though it must be explained that religious houses were expected, if not bound, in those days, to offer hospitality to the family of their founders. There may have been other reasons which can only be guessed at now. The convent might afford more



privacy than a princely residence—Inés would be safer in the absence of her lover from the eyes of prying or desirous men—it was a sanctuary which it would be supposed, force would not violate.

In all probability, the actual residence of the lovers was a separate building included in the vast enclosure of the nunnery and hidden from the observation of its inmates—not impossibly, the Quinta de Pombal, to which Inés is said to have resorted during the heat of the summer. Figueiri do says there were two springs on this spot in Queen Isabel's day (1326) which she diverted into a single fountain, since known as the Fonte dos Amores. The Fonte das Lagrimas, called so in memory of the luckless Inés, lies a little to the north of this. The spot is close to the Mondego and forms part of a very lovely landscape. A recent traveller, Mr. Aubrey F. G. Bell, reports that of the convent only the church remains, "and this all sunken in the earth, so that the beautiful capitals of some of the pillars are but a few feet from the ground, and of one pointed arch only the tip is visible, through which one may look into a blank space of deep water beneath the building. . . . The Fonte dos Amores, a clear spring, wells from beneath a plant-grown rock, the water then flowing through a stone channel, in the form of a rough cross, to a green stagnant pond. Here on a stone are carved the lines of Camoens :

'The daughters of Mondego long, with tears,  
Of her dark death kept fresh the memory,  
And that remembrance might outlive the years,  
Of tears thus shed a crystal spring supply.

The name they gave it then, even now it bears,  
The love of Inés there to signify,  
How clear a spring the flowers from above  
Waters—in tears it flows, its name is love.'

It is a place of cool shade, with maidenhair ferns and the sound of flowing water, beneath great cypresses." One of the

cypresses, brought down by a storm in 1838, bore the inscription : " I gave shade to the lovely Inés."

In this cool and delicious retreat, Inés dwelt eight or nine years as the wife of the Infante. We have lately been told, on the authority of Mr. Arnold Bennett, that no passion lasts more than three years. If this be true of us moderns, our forefathers must have had a greater genius for fidelity, or their womenfolk for pleasing ; especially when we consider how quickly age comes upon the women of the south and that Inés bore the prince no fewer than four children during this period. Pedro does not seem, however, to have surfeited her with his company. His hunting and princely duties took him frequently away from her side to the farthest parts of Portugal. He returned, perhaps, only when the loving fit was on him, to the bower beside the Mondego.

Meanwhile, he did not neglect his beloved's interests. A deed is extant, dated January 12th, 1352, by which he confers on her the advowson of the church of Santo André de Candella in the diocese of Oporto. Her brothers were his constant associates. Other Castillian friends and kinsfolk came over the border, to profit by her influence. The jealousy of the Portuguese was aroused. Complaints, too, as might have been expected, were heard from the Abbess of the Poor Clares—here were the Infante and a woman living in sin at the very door of her convent ! What was King Affonso going to do about it ?

The king was deeply shocked. He, one of the most blood-thirsty kings of Portugal, was, as not uncommonly happens, highly intolerant of the sins of the flesh. His first question to Pedro was, " Are you married to this woman ? " To which the prince is recorded to have answered, " No."

Affonso, we are now asked to believe, upon this, invited his erring son to " make an honest woman " of Inés by marrying her—promising that if he did, he would treat her as Infanta of Portugal. Again we are told Pedro answered, " No." In the light of after events it is incredible that the invitation

or refusal was ever given. The invitation must have been originally attributed to the savage king by some servile chronicler anxious to palliate his subsequent crime.

The truth is that Affonso wanted to marry his son to another foreign princess and Inés stood in the way. This is creditable to Dom Pedro; princes before and since have seen no objection to taking a wife and keeping a mistress as well. He may have been married to Inés, as he afterwards declared, and feared to tell his father so. The king's ire increased. It was reported to him that the Castros were involving the Infante in a plot against the crown of Castille, to which he could advance some shadowy sort of claim in right of his mother. Intrigues of this description might embroil Portugal in war with the more powerful kingdom. Against the Castros, a powerful faction was forming. One wonders whether Pedro would have been suffered to keep a Portuguese mistress in peace.

So far from wishing their marriage to take place, Affonso sent a letter to Pope Innocent VI, by the Archbishop Pereira, stressing the carnal and spiritual affinity between his son and Inés, and entreating his Holiness never to grant a dispensation for their marriage, should he be asked. Another royal order directed Inés to leave the precincts of the convent; but this was disregarded. Affonso is represented as not being personally unfriendly to the woman, and as having long chats with her beside her favourite fountain. He must have asked her whether she was in fact married. Whatever answer she returned confirmed him in the belief that she constituted a danger to the royal family and the realm. In secret, but in council and as an act of state, he decreed her death.

It is said that the Queen, Donha Beatriz and the Archbishop of Braga warned the Infante of what was in his father's mind. But by now the quarrel had gone on so long that he could hardly have expected a fatal upshot. On a January day, 1355, he went a-hunting. Word was brought to the King at Montemor. The hour to strike had come. Affonso

took horse and rode to Coimbra, followed by a numerous train, which included the Bishop of Oporto, various courtiers and high officers of state, among them Pero Coelho, Alvaro Gonçalves, and Diogo Lopes Pacheco. With them rode a certain other official wearing a red hood. The Mondego was in flood. The day was to come when certain of these riders must have wished they had been swept away by its waters that dull winter morning.

Coming to Coimbra, they posted sentries around the convent. Inés, summoned, found herself confronted by the King, with whom she had often had friendly chats in that room, and by his armed followers. Overcome at the sight of her, Affonso motioned to Gonçalves to read the parchment he had signed the night before. It was the sentence of death.

It is easy to reconstruct the scene that followed. The shrieks of the doomed woman brought her four children upon the scene. The King went out of the room, telling his servants to accomplish the sentence. Inés, followed by her screaming children and maidservants, rushed hither and thither in search of a hiding place. Someone seized her by her dull-gold hair and dragged her forward. Another ruffian bound her hands. They forced her, shrieking, to her knees. Then the man with a red hood stepped forward and with his long heavy sword hewed through the "heron's neck." The murder had been done according to the forms of law. Inés de Castro lay, her head severed from her body, her blood saturating her dull gold hair.

Messengers, white to the lips, sought the Infante Pedro in his hunting grounds in the hills of Beira, and told him that the mother of his children had been butchered—butchered like the beasts he slew for pleasure. And the man who had murdered her was his father. At Coimbra he found the bloodstains washed away, the body of his beloved hidden from his sight till another day beneath the pavement of the abbey church. Taking with him his motherless children and accompanied by the dead woman's brothers, the prince took



the road to the north. He meant war. All those who were disaffected towards the Puritanical butcher, Affonso IV, flocked to his standard. He appeared in arms before Oporto, and spared it only out of friendship for its defender, Archbishop Pereira. Withdrawing, he mercilessly ravaged the northern provinces. The king marched against him. One would like to hear that his son dragged him from his tent and slaughtered him as he slaughtered Inés. Instead, Pedro allowed himself to be swayed by his mother, Queen Beatriz, and the Archbishop. A compact was drawn up and sworn to by the Queen at Oporto, by the King at Guimaraes, and the Infante at Canavezes. Pedro promised to pardon all those who had had a hand in the murder of Inés, while the King granted a general amnesty and "granted to his son royal plenary jurisdiction in criminal and civil affairs. . . . In effect, the treaty made the Dom Pedro regent, with very small reservations."

Content with depriving his bloody father of his authority, the Infante did not seek his life. It seems an unworthy concession, but the most deeply injured son might well shrink from wreaking vengeance on his own parent. It is also stated that the two never saw each other again. Two years later, Dom Affonso, happily, died—summoned, it was whispered, before the judgment seat of God by the victim of Coimbra. It is interesting to read that this assassin of a defenceless woman, the mother of his own grandchildren, was "an exemplary husband, who never gave any scandal in his conjugal life" !

Dom Pedro became King of Portugal on May 28th, 1357. He had already taken another mistress, Donha Thereza Lourenço, whose son John afterwards became king ; but the murderers of Inés knew very well that he had not forgotten or forgiven. Pacheco, Gonçalves and Coelho, whose hands were the most deeply embrued, upon the advice of the dying Affonso, had left the country. Pedro had sworn to pardon them. But from the moment of his accession, he made it



plain that reparation and vengeance for his dead love was to be his cardinal policy. By diplomatic concessions, he obtained the surrender of Coelho and Gonçalves from the King of Castille. Pacheco, luckily for him, had fled farther afield, some say to Aragon, some say to England. Pedro had his wretched prisoners brought before him at Santarem and had them tortured while he looked on and ate his dinner. It is said that he took a hand in the hideous business himself, and when they cursed him for a perjurer, ordered their hearts to be cut out and thrown upon the table.

He could offer no more bloody sacrifices to the injured shade, so he set about vindicating her fair name. Before an assembly of prelates and grandees held at Cantanhede on June 12th, 1360, he solemnly declared that Inés de Castro had been his wife. He was privately married to her, he said, in his chamber at Bragança, six or seven years before, the ceremony being performed by the Dean of Guarda and the only witness being his valet, Estevao Lobato. The impediment of consanguinity had been overcome by an old Papal bull issued at the time of his projected marriage to Donha Blanca. The assembled notables naturally listened to their king's announcement with respect, not unmixed, I suspect, with incredulity. A few days later, at Coimbra, the declaration was embodied in a state document, the facts being sworn to by the Dean (now a Bishop) and the valet, and their testimony attested by the various prelates and officers of state.

But—a curious lapse of memory!—though the King, the priest and the valet were all agreed that the marriage took place on New Year's Day, none of them could recall the exact year. Whether the declaration was true or simply an act of homage to Pedro's dead love, will never be known with certainty. He might have kept the marriage a secret from his dread father out of regard for his lady-love's safety; but when that consideration no longer existed, why did he not proclaim it immediately, instead of waiting five years? On the other hand, it may have been his discovery of the

marriage, or the woman's confessing of it, that determined Affonso to do her to death and so get her out of the way of his dynastic schemes. On the whole, however, it must be admitted that Pedro did not make a very convincing case. But during his reign no one dared to impugn his statement publicly, and it has since been accepted by a good many Portuguese historians, though when Thereza Lourenco's son afterwards succeeded to the throne of Portugal, it was held that Inés de Castro's children, his half-brothers, were no more legitimate than he.

Inés, then, had been his wife, said Pedro. Death, he resolved, should not cheat her of the honour which should have been hers as Queen of Portugal.

Follows that amazing scene, unparalleled in human history, such as one sees in nightmares. On a cloudy morning, April 25th, 1361, there entered into the convent church of St. Clare, at Coimbra, a solemn and sombre procession of mitred bishops, abbots, grandees and officers of state. Before the altar, on his throne, sat their liege lord, the King of Portugal. Beside him reclined, on another throne, the strangely still form of a woman, in royal robes, a crown on her head, her face obscured by waves of dull gold hair . . . the Queen of Portugal! And before the quiet shape, the statesmen, prelates and grandees bowed in homage, the boldest, perhaps, trembling before the stare of those empty sockets more than before the fierce regard of the living King.

Portugal had acknowledged her Queen. All that Pedro could do for his dead love had been done. For the last time he saw the beloved body which had procured him such exquisite happiness. Now the world had at last done with her. The grandees departed. The chanting monks drew near. The coffin lid once more closed on her.

With such solemnities as Portugal had seldom seen, along a road lined with a double row of torchbearers, the body of Queen Inés was transported by night to Alcobaça. There it was laid in a tomb already prepared to receive it, in the transept

of the abbey church, between the tombs of Affonso III and the Queens Urraca and Beatriz de Guzman. Beside her the King had made a tomb for himself. Both are of white marble, elaborately sculptured, resting on six lions, and bearing the effigies of their respective dead. Inés is shown in the robes of a queen, supported by figures of weeping angels.

Only a few of the Queen's bones now lie beneath. The tomb was opened and rifled in search of treasure by the troops of Junot during the invasion of Portugal in 1807. The remains found within were scattered. Assassins took her life, and the French ghouls had her body.

Pedro vowed he would never take another wife, and kept his word. Like George II, he had mistresses instead, not only Thereza Lourenco, but also Beatriz Diaz. All that was good about him was his love for Inés. He proved as ferocious as his father, and a hypocrite to boot, for he punished in others with the utmost savagery the very failings to which he was most subject. He died twelve years after Inés, at Estremoz, on January 18th, 1367, and was succeeded by Fernando, his son by Constancia.

## IV

## THE PORTUGUESE LUCRETIA BORGIA

TRUTH, we are often told, is stranger than fiction. What makes it stranger is that people in real life refuse to behave consistently or relevantly, or in accordance with the laws of poetic justice. The novelist's characters are all black or white—real humans are piebald or grey. Pedro, after his unexampled devotion to his dead love, should have remained physically as well as sentimentally faithful to her all his days. We know that he did not. His children should have been obsessed by the sad story of their parents—at least that tragedy should have swayed their sentiments and sympathies. Again it was not so. The posterity of Pedro and Inés went their way; they loved and hated; they pursued their interests as we all do—without the least regard to the loves and hates of their forbears.

King Fernando the Fair, the son of Pedro's first wife, should have abhorred the children of his mother's rival. Instead we are told that he loved his half-sister, Brites, the daughter of Inés, with an unpleasant intensity. Probably she resembled her mother, and Fernando had inherited from his father a predisposition towards that type. It was this attachment which gave occasion to the greater and greatest passion of the weak king's life.

Among the ladies attendant on the Infanta Brites was Donha Maria, the widow of a gentleman named Sousa, who had wisely quitted Portugal upon finding that his rival in the affections of a certain lady was no other than his liege-lord,



Dom Pedro. (One wonders whether this lady was one of the two mistresses with whom the heartbroken king essayed to console himself, or yet another.) Donha Maria herself was the daughter of Dom Martim Telles de Menezes, a Castillian noble who had settled in the northern province of Tras-os-Montes. It is hardly necessary to say of people of their station and generation that they were descended illegitimately, from some king or other. Maria had a younger sister, Leonor, who is described as of uncommon beauty, with seductive eyes, and an expressive and energetic countenance. She was married to John da Cunha, lord of Pombeiro. In an evil hour for Portugal, Leonor came to visit her sister at the Infanta's house. This was in the year 1370. Fernando happened to be visiting his beloved sister at the same moment. He fell in love with Leonor at first sight.

Ambition was the lady of Pombeiro's master passion. She was no Inés, ready to fall, lovesick, without naming a price, into the arms of a lover. Husbands had been got rid of before in Portugal; Fernando was not married. Leonor set herself to inflame the king's passion without satisfying it. The two were surprised in amorous dalliance by the husband. An angry man, we may be sure, was John da Cunha. But whether the lover asserted his kingly authority or the woman used her fine eyes as other wives have done on similar occasions, to soothe her husband, it appears that Leonor continued to enjoy the suspicious hospitality of the Infanta.

The violent irruption of the husband seems to have determined the generally weak king to make the woman officially as well as physically his own. He begged Maria to use her influence on his behalf, and when she hesitated, astounded her by announcing that he was resolved to make her sister though she was already married, his wife.

Donha Maria protested; their uncle protested; but Leonor, promised the crown at which she had aimed, surrendered, and went with the king to Lisbon.

There the lovers presently found themselves assailed in



the old palace near the cathedral by an angry mob, led by Vasques, a tailor. The people had heard that the king proposed to tear away a vassal's wife and seat her on the throne. They hurled insults at the adulteress and denounced Fernando for dragging the royal dignity through the mud. The king assured them that he had not married Leonor, and promised to confer with them next day at the church of Santo Domingo. When the trusting townsfolk kept the appointment, they were attacked and dispersed by the royal troops. Vasques lost his head and other ringleaders their hands or feet.

Fernando and Leonor had gone up the river during the night, to Santarem. Hearing that the riot was quelled, they journeyed to Oporto, and in the chapel of a monastery adjacent to that city they went through a form of marriage. The woman's previous marriage was alleged to be void on the usual plea of consanguinity. The insulted da Cunha took refuge in Castille, and being detected in a conspiracy to poison his royal rival, was deprived of his estate as well as his wife.

If it be wondered at that any priest should have been found to bless a union so flagrantly bigamous, let it be remembered that these were the days of the Babylonish captivity of the Popes at Avignon and that the great schism in the Church was distant but a few years. The clergy in Spain and Portugal were hardly in a position to blame their sovereigns. The right of a priest to have a concubine instead of a wife was, tacitly at least, conceded. Pereira, the Archbishop of Braga, whom we saw playing the peacemaker between Dom Affonso and his son, was himself the father of the Prior of Crato, who in turn had no fewer than 32 children, among them, the famous Nuno Alvares de Pereira, the "Portuguese Achilles."

A hundred and seventy years before, the kingdom of France was laid under an interdict for its monarch's violation of the marriage law. No such chastisement overtook the pettier King of Portugal, for an offence as grave as David's. No bishop brought down the lightning of the Church to blast the highly-placed wrongdoers. The adulterous marriage does

not seem to have been challenged. We hear only of one protest, and that apparently not on the score of the irregularity of the union, but the standing of the bride.

It came from the least likely quarter.

Fernando's kinsfolk, his courtiers and vassals, hastened to kiss the new queen's hand in token of homage. One held back. This was Dom Dinis, the second son of Pedro and Inés. "Leonor should rather kiss my hand," he objected. Yet Leonor's position was hardly more irregular than his mother's had been. The king, furious, drew his dagger and attacked his half-brother, but the two were separated by the king's old tutor or governor.

There were no more protests. Leonor Telles reigned unquestioned, the Queen of King Fernando, till his death in 1383. Her memory is execrated, indeed, by the Portuguese, but not on account of her bigamous marriage. "From this event," writes the historian and novelist Herculano, "until she was dragged in chains to Castille by those whom she had summoned to desolate her country, this Portuguese Lucretia Borgia becomes in our history a species of diabolical phantom, which appears whenever there is a deed of treachery, blood or atrocity."

The Portuguese ought to know; but it does seem to me that they have accepted altogether too uncritically the reports of such chroniclers as Fernão Lope, who wrote in the reign and under the influence of Leonor's enemy, John I. Give a political personage a bad name and it will stick longer than elsewhere, in the Peninsula. Even on the facts and allegations supplied by these unanimously hostile witnesses, I can see in Leonor Telles nothing more diabolical than an ambitious, unscrupulous woman, supremely anxious for the interests of her daughter.

But her tale is worth telling for its own sake.

Among the earliest crimes laid to her charge is contriving her sister's murder. Dom John, the eldest son of Inés de Castro, had conceived a passion for Maria de Menezes, though

she was the mother of a grown-up son by her late husband. When Leonor bore a daughter—the Infanta Beatriz—to Fernando, fearing lest the girl be passed over in the succession, she proposed to marry her to this John, her husband's eldest half brother. She then learned that he was secretly married to her sister and had a son by her—a son who is always referred to as Dom Fernando de Leça and never mentioned as an heir to the throne. This check to her plans and the possibility of her sister one day replacing her on the throne of Portugal is said to have exasperated Donha Leonor.

With characteristic craft and resolution, we are asked to believe, she laid her plans for disposing of her sister and her sister's husband. "Knowing the jealous and irascible temper of Dom John, Leonor Telles did not hesitate to lay a charge of adultery against her own sister, getting it brought to the prince's ears by his comptroller, Diogo Affonso de Figueirido, and the governor of Elvas, Garcia Affonso de Sobrado. Blind with jealousy and wrath, and thinking only of instant vengeance, the Infante set off for Coimbra, where his wife then lay. Passing through Thomar, he stayed awhile with the master of the Order of Christ, who was no other than Lopes Dias de Sousa, his wife's son by her previous marriage. The gloomy preoccupied manner of the Infante alarmed the Master, who, fearing vaguely for his mother, sent word to her to be on her guard; but Maria Telles, having no crime on her conscience, gave no heed to the warning.

"Dom John, reaching Coimbra at break of day, went straight to his residence and walked unannounced into his wife's bed-chamber. Springing up, Maria enquired the reason of this unexpected and unceremonious entry. John replied, in a voice half choked with anger, that he was come to kill her as an adulteress.

"Maria Telles answered that she had been basely slandered and that he must be mad. If he would curb his anger and listen, she would be able to convince him of her innocence. Dom John replied that the time for speech was past, and



snatching off the quilt, he stabbed the half-naked woman with his dagger, first through the breasts and then the groin. The unfortunate woman, blood issuing from her mouth and her wounds, expired within a few minutes.

“The servants of Maria Telles, who had overheard the altercation and feared to interfere, and her uncle, Gonalo Mendes de Vasconcellos, now rushed into the room. The townsfolk, as soon as they heard the news, attacked the palace of the Infante. The murderer, livid and horror-struck with his own deed, galloped away to Campos, six leagues from Coimbra.”

The son of Inés de Castro thus murdered a woman, his wife, in the town where his mother was murdered twenty years before. But the blood of his mother’s assassin also ran in his veins and clouded the memory of her death. Most likely no thought at all of the tragedy which he might easily have witnessed in his childhood crossed his mind as he rode from Thomar to Coimbra, crazed with jealousy.

What Leonor could have hoped to gain by his crime is not at all clear. She expected that as a consequence he would be expelled from Portugal, someone says. But he left brothers behind him in his place. And though he did, in fact, leave his country, it was after he had been pardoned by the King, and in fear of the avenging sword of his wife-victim’s son.

Leonor ruled the king and the kingdom as she thought fit. No historian denies her the possession of abundant courage and ability. As no son was born to her, her policy was naturally directed to securing the succession for her daughter. At one time the little Infanta very nearly became the wife of Edmund, Earl of Cambridge, afterwards Duke of York, the fifth son of Edward III. The English prince came to Portugal with a gang of English knights and men-at-arms, who at first did good service against the Spaniards, but then fell to plundering and murdering the Portuguese. When they were at last got rid of, Leonor arranged a match between little Beatriz and Juan I, the widowed King of Castille. The poor child

had been betrothed five times before she was ten years old. Here again the historians perceive the wickedness of Leonor—in thus wedding her daughter to a foreign reigning prince, her object must have been to keep the regency to herself.

Fernando did not assist at the marriage. He died on October 22nd, 1383, without ever having made an effort to get rid of the woman he had unlawfully acquired. She had not been faithful to him—well-meaning people had been careful to apprise him of that. Her lover, he had long been aware, was Dom Juan Fernandes Andeiro, a skilful diplomatist, who at her instance had been created Count of Ourem. The story goes that one day, upon the Count arriving in her presence sweated and dirty with hard riding, the Queen tore her veil across and gave him the half to serve as a towel. Whereupon the Count, upon his knees, taking it from her, whispered some words about cherishing the linen which had touched her person. The words were overheard by a lady-in-waiting, who repeated them to her husband, who repeated them to the King. While he lay dying at Almada, Fernando decided to take the usual revenge for this slight upon himself, and wrote to his half-brother, John, the Master of Avis, ordering him to kill Andeiro. But, with what the native historians appear to consider criminal weakness, he repented and tore the letter to shreds.

The Queen's lover, we are told, had more lives than the proverbial cat. Everyone about the Court, except Leonor herself, had tried to kill him at one time or another. The Queen's brother in particular affected the deepest indignation at her shame, and could only be got to suffer it in consideration of a munificent grant of money and lands. When the King was dead and the heralds were proclaiming the accession of the absent Beatriz, Andeiro perhaps deemed himself safe. But his nine lives were all gone.

Within the palace, the lovers heard the angry murmurs of the people. If Beatriz, Queen of Castille, were to be Queen of Portugal, then it followed that her husband would be



King. The very existence of the nation, men said, was jeopardised. Eyes were turned upon the numerous love children of Dom Pedro, the late King's half-brother. John the Murderer had been promptly clapped into prison in Castille, but he sent word through Leonor's enemy and long-forgotten first husband, to his half-brother, the other John Master of the Order of Avis, ceding to him his claim.

On December 6th, 1383, the Master, followed by an armed escort, forced his way into the Queen's chamber. He found her, as he had reckoned upon, in the company of Andeiro, but her sensitive brother and several attendants were also, present. John excused his intrusion by a request for further instructions as to the military protection of the frontier. The matter, the Queen assured him, should have her attention ; meantime, she observed, eyeing the Master's following, she was disposed to approve the practice of the English in leaving their arms outside when they paid visits. Andeiro, too, had taken the alarm. Very coolly he asked the Master to dine with him, and taking him by the arm, drew him from the room. He would have done better to stay in the royal presence. The Master whipped out his sword and cut him over the head. The wounded man made a rush for Leonor's room, but was intercepted by one of the Master's esquires, who finished him with a short sword.

His death shriek was heard by his mistress. Realising what had happened, she asked the assassins if she too was to be murdered. The Master told her that she was safe ; then, leaving the palace, he announced the favourite's death to the people of Lisbon. By way of celebration, the good citizens murdered their Spanish bishop and attacked the Jews, whom the Queen seems to have held in favour. The next day the assassin returned to the palace and asked the Queen's pardon for what he had done. We are not surprised to hear that her greeting was cold. It was at the moment of his departure that Donha Leonor beheld, as she followed him to the door, the corpse of her lover stretched out on the floor. " She was

amazed that it had not been carried away, and indignantly bade the Master's accomplices bury him, since he was as great a noble as they. They heeded not her words, but departed, and the body was left there, barely covered with a green cloth, the rest of that day, as none would handle it. That night the Queen had the Count buried in the church of San Martinho, hard by." So died the lover of Queen Leonor, a handsome man not yet forty years old.

The affronted woman accepted his murder as a declaration of war by her late husband's half-brother. And as such, of course, it was meant. John of Avis had made up his mind to have the crown of Portugal. It is admitted that Leonor had up till that fatal hour wished to keep the Castillians out of the kingdom, if only to keep the regency for herself. Now, realising that her life was in danger, she fled from Lisbon to Alemquer. With her went her treasurer, the Jew, Dom Judas, disguised as an esquire.

For a moment, the Master of Avis hesitated as to his definite course, and even allowed it to be proposed that he should wed the woman whose lover he had killed. Leonor, it is said, listened to the suggestion with a dreadful smile. Presently she heard that the Master had been proclaimed Defender of the Kingdom as a first step to the royal dignity. Then the Castillians came over the border to assert the rights of Beatriz. War raged up and down the little kingdom.

Leonor, at this stage, resigned the regency in favour of her son-in-law, Juan I. What else could she have done, seeing that his wife was the lawful sovereign of Portugal and he the commander of many legions?

But she found before long that she was anything but welcome in her daughter's court. The King of Castille found her altogether too gay and flighty for a widow, the mother of his consort. He missed no opportunity to shew her that she no longer ruled in Portugal. While it still looked as though Beatriz would win, the Jews of Lisbon, a numerous community, having lost their chief rabbi, sought her

permission to elect another. Leonor, taking the matter out of her daughter's hands, nominated her favourite, Dom Judas, for the vacancy. The King of Castille promptly snubbed her and appointed a Spanish Jew, one David Negro. This slight, among others, disgusted the Queen-mother with her son-in-law. She wrote letters to her supporters, urging them to abandon the invading foreigners and to rally to the standard of the Master of Avis.

At that time the Castillians were besieging Coimbra. The place was defended by Leonor's troublesome brother, who had already gone over to the Master's side. Finding herself virtually a prisoner in her daughter's camp, the bold scheming woman got in touch with a Castillian grandee, the Count of Trastamara, promising if he would get her safely into Coimbra, to marry him. Then they would proclaim themselves Queen and King of Portugal. Her brother was to make a sortie from the city, Trastamara was to sally forth with his men, Leonor in their midst, to repel him, and to pursue him within the walls, when the gates would be closed upon them. It was a pretty scheme, but too many people were privy to it. The Franciscan friar who was to give the signal for Trastamara's outrush by ringing a bell, disclosed the plot to David Negro, the Jew. He promptly betrayed it to the King of Castille. Leonor was summoned into the presence of her daughter and her daughter's husband and confronted with the lesser conspirators, whose confession had been extorted on the rack. Beatriz tearfully reproached her with trying to deprive her of her crown. Leonor, game to the last, hurled abuse at the Jew and fiercely upbraided the King for daring to arrest her on such testimony. No doubt the plot was deliberately magnified into an attempt against his Majesty's life, so as to provide a handy excuse for getting rid of Leonor once for all. Her life was spared, but she was sent a captive to Castille, to end her days in a convent at Tordesillas, on April 27th, 1386, a year after the proclamation of the Master as John I of Portugal, and nine months after his crowning victory at

Aljubarrota, which rid the little kingdom of its Spanish invaders.

She was in all probability less than forty years of age. Portuguese historians gloat over her in her cloister-prison and picture her as tormented by the memory of her crimes. In other lands, much more wicked women have been revered as heroines. Even when we consider her two marriages, it is by no means proved that the first was not void—at all events, as we have seen, the validity of the second was never seriously contested and the legitimacy of her daughter by Fernando was never impugned. The charge of having compassed her sister's death hardly deserves examination. She is also accused of having on one occasion plotted to poison John of Avis ; but she could hardly be reproached for this by one who murdered her lover almost before her eyes and ousted her daughter from the throne. If again, she had been the utterly selfish, unscrupulous monster she is represented, she would have saved herself by accepting the Master's amazing proposal to marry her. To blame her for the civil war and the invasion of Portugal which ensued, is simply absurd. She fought for her daughter's rights, and it was John of Avis, who, by depriving her of the regency, gave that daughter's husband an excuse for interfering. In the end, she showed both courage and patriotism by urging her countrymen to support her deadliest rival. Leonor Telles was by no means as black as the writers in that rival's pay have painted her.

•



## V

### A BAVARIAN TRAGEDY

THE name of Agnes seems to bring with it ill-fortune. Agnes of Meran died unhappily; Agnes Sorel, with whom we are not concerned, died young. I have told the sad story of Inés (Agnes) de Castro. Eighty years after her death, her tragedy was almost exactly re-enacted with another Agnes for the victim.

Nothing but the outline of the story is known, though it has been embellished and distorted by German poets and by German folk-lore. This Agnes was the beautiful daughter of Kaspar Bernauer, a respectable barber of Augsburg, in Bavaria. In the year 1432 the patricians of that wealthy city organised a festival and tournament in honour of Albrecht, the son and heir of Ernest, the Duke of Bavaria-Munich. (For Bavaria was cut up in those days into more than one state.) Possibly the common people were admitted to have a look at their betters; possibly an exception was made in favour of the beauty of the city. At all events, the prince saw Agnes Bernauer and loved her at sight.

She was less frail than her Portuguese namesake. Her terms were marriage. To these terms the Prince agreed. Duke Albrecht married the barber's daughter, in secret, you may be sure, and established her in the castle of Frohburg. There, for a while, they lived in great happiness.

If Agnes had heard of the fate of Inés de Castro, which is certainly unlikely, she would have been prepared for what happened next. Sovereigns have an extraordinary passion



for getting their sons married, though what difference it can make to a man whether a grandson or some other stranger takes on his job, after his death, I have never been able to understand. Possibly, this time Duke Ernest had something more immediate to gain by his son's marrying. The lady indicated was Anna of Brunswick.

Albrecht, who was made of finer stuff than Pedro of Portugal, thereupon told his father that he was already married to the barber's daughter—a statement which the Duke affected to disbelieve. He pushed his simulated incredulity so far that his son, when he presented himself at a tournament at Ratisbon, was denied admission, by the ducal order. Only the pure, as we learn with some astonishment, were allowed to take part in these knightly encounters, and it was notorious that His Highness was living in sin with Agnes Bernauer.

In vain the indignant Prince made oath that Agnes was his wife by God's holy ordinance. The marshals and heralds believed only what their sovereign required them to believe. Albrecht withdrew, deeply insulted. Within a few days he proclaimed to all Bavaria that the barber's daughter was his lawful wife and Duchess. He drew her from their retreat at Frohburg and installed her with ceremony in the castle of Straubing, above the Danube.

Had no rumour reached Germany of what had been done in Portugal in their grandsire's days? Seemingly not, since Albrecht, unsuspecting of his father, one day left his home unguarded. Duke Ernest had been watching for this hour. He pounced upon the helpless Agnes and made her his prisoner.

But he did not stain his hands with her blood. Unlike Affonso of Portugal, he had an overlord, the Emperor, to consider, and perhaps the conscience of his people also. To secure his ends, he charged the girl with witchcraft. Four years before, Jeanne D'Arc had been got rid of in the same way. But the judges of Agnes Bernauer decided at least

to give her the benefit of the doubt. She was subjected to the ordeal by water. With her hands tied together she was thrown into the Danube. If she was innocent, she would sink ; if guilty, she would swim. The Duke agreed to the test, no doubt with inward derision. She sank. His highness, I imagine, had taken care that no means of rescuing her were at hand. So perished Agnes Bernauer, Duchess of and in Bavaria, on October 12th, 1435.

Albrecht sought to avenge his murdered bride, waged war on his father, and slew his soldiers. The Emperor Sigismund intervened. The father and son were perforce reconciled. Albrecht even married Anna of Brunswick, the wife proposed for him. Having gained his ends, Duke Ernest built a chapel over the grave of the woman he had murdered, and her husband ordered many Masses to be said for her soul. Her name still lives in German story. Without the barber's daughter, the memory of both Dukes would long since have faded away.

## VI

## THE KING OF FRANCE'S WIFE

MADAME DE MAINTENON would have been by no means pleased to find herself included in this company. With none of the sisterhood with which I am concerned would she have had any sympathy, except perhaps with the wives of Jerome Bonaparte and the Duke of Gloucester. But as the only morganatic wife of a French king, known to history, she cannot be left out of this galley.

I would gladly have excluded her, for her personality makes no appeal to me. She ran her course in the seventeenth century, but she might be hailed as the first of the Victorians. In her letters (of which there are thousands) she condemns the immodest dress, the vulgarity, and the loose morals of the rising generation, exactly as the *grande dame* of yesterday did. Her passion was respectability. She confessed to this in after years, admitting that she desired above all things to be treated with respect and to be well spoken of. "I even nursed the sick," she says, "not so much out of pity for them, as in order to be praised for my charity." She preferred the esteem of the many to the devotedness of the few. Love, she neither wanted nor gave. The society of dull ladies she deliberately affected, reminding us of a living English actress who, when asked by Mme. Vandervelde how she could stand the company of such bores, replied that it was such a comfort to know one was in real respectable society.

As might be expected, Mme. de Maintenon has found more sympathetic biographers on this side of the Channel



Louis XIV.





than among her own countrymen. These latter, it seems to me, do not make sufficient allowance for the effect of our heroine's earliest experiences. These were calculated to make any girl turn with loathing and dread from the very appearance of what we call Bohemianism, from the shadier and more disreputable sides of life. Some look for the explanation in her Calvinistic origin. Her father's father, Agrippa d'Aubigné, was indeed a staunch and fanatical Huguenot, who fought well for Henri Quatre, and ended his days in the congenial atmosphere of Geneva. A very different type was his son, Constant, whom he described in his will as "A destroyer of his family honour by his enormous crimes," and passed over in favour of his grandsons, if there ever should be any. Among the crimes referred to was Constant's murder of his unfaithful wife and her lover. The rest of the younger d'Aubigné's life was disorderly, profligate, and wretched. Many years were passed in gaol. At Bordeaux, like Captain Macheath, he won the love of the warden's daughter, Jeanne de Cardilhac, and married her in the precincts of the prison. Two boys were born; and then, on November 28th, 1635, while her father was again in gaol at Niort, a girl, Françoise, afterwards Marquise de Maintenon. She came, therefore, from the same country as Eleonore d'Olbreuse, of whom I shall presently speak, and that great writer and great lover, Pierre Loti.

The first impressions of the little d'Aubigné girl must have been similar to those of Little Dorrit. From the shadow of the prison she and her brothers were carried off to the Château of Mursay by their mother's sister, Mme de Villette, an ardent Calvinist. Constant seems to have abjured "the religion," and his daughter was baptized a Catholic. Meanwhile, Mme d'Aubigné made unceasing efforts to effect the release of her worthless husband. "You would be sorry if I granted your request, madame," was the terms of Cardinal Richelieu's refusal. More careless or good-natured, his successor, Mazarin, let the gaol-bird go in 1642. The fellow had good connections and secured an appointment to represent a trading concern

at the little isle of Marie Galante, in the Antilles. He started off, taking with him his weary wife and reluctant children. A year later, after the manner of such men, he came back to France with them. The islet was desert—did not answer to his expectations—the prodigal's usual excuse. . . . Certainly the name of the isle is not such as to command confidence.

No money was to be had. Old Agrippa was dead, but apparently such fortune as he left did not come to his grandson. Francoise, now eight years of age, knew the extremity of want. Her eldest brother was killed in a duel. Finally Constant decided to try his luck fighting for or against the Turks. In 1647, he set off for the East. He got as far as Orange, on the Rhone, and there, providentially, died.

His widow, I doubt not, was glad enough. He had ruined her life, destroyed her capacity for joy or affection. Mme de Maintenon remembers to have been kissed by her mother only once in her life. It is no wonder that the child clung desperately to the kind Calvinistic aunt who had again taken her off her mother's hands. But Mme de Villette unwisely attempted to convert the nominally Catholic child to her own belief. People who care nothing at all about their relatives' bodies are frequently very much concerned for their souls. The news that little Françoise was being restrained from going to Mass alarmed a distant connexion of the d'Aubignés or Cardilhacs named Mme de Neuillan. She put in a claim for the child's guardianship, the mother remaining a passive spectator, and the court ordered Mme de Villette to hand her over. Françoise left her Huguenot aunt with deep regret. She implored her new custodian not to send her to a convent—"a hell worse than death." But to a convent she was sent. Ultimately she found kind friends among the Ursulines of the Rue St. Jacques, in Paris, and was persuaded by them to abjure Calvinism. She did this only with the reservation that she did not believe her aunt to be damned. This is one of the few lovable attitudes in which we ever surprise her.

She was now in her teens, and divided her time between

Paris and her native province of Saintonge, between the convent and her guardian's home. From Mme de Neuillan she received only a modicum of kindness. She, poor school-girl, suffered agonies of shame as she outgrew her shabby frocks. And she came in for plenty of attention in the Paris of the mid-seventeenth century, for she had grown into a beauty with a dazzling complexion.

Perhaps it was with a view to getting her off her hands that Mme de Neuillan introduced her charge to such friends as she had in Paris. Among these was Paul Scarron, wit, man of letters, and lay canon, a hopeless cripple, who never went to bed and lived a jolly life surrounded by clever fellows and jovial companions. The awkward friendless Mademoiselle d'Aubigné interested him. She was beautiful and, as he must have perceived, sexless, but that was no disadvantage in the eyes of a permanent invalid. "Men followed me because I had youth and beauty," she said in after years, "but I excited feelings of friendship rather than passion." Scarron, nevertheless, opened her eyes to the dangers to which a dowerless girl was exposed. Then he made a proposal: if she wished to enter a convent he would pay her dowry; if that did not please her, she could become his wife, "And I promise you," he added, "that the only weeping you will ever hear in my house will be on account of my death."

Her indifferent mother and guardian consenting, Françoise became Mme Scarron. All she brought him was a pair of large eyes, a fine pair of hands, a beautiful figure, and a dowry of four livres. Their contract of marriage has been found. It is dated April, 1652, and one of the clauses stipulates that the union shall be blessed by the Church whenever either party demands it. Apparently neither party did demand it, which may be the reason that Françoise, writing some years later to her brother, was able to say; "I, who have never been married . . ." In another place she coolly refers to the marriage as having in it "Very little of the heart and nothing of the body." Scarron wanted a nurse and a pet, but soon



discovered that he had got himself a prim governess. "He had a good heart," she admits, "I cured him of licentious talk. Everyone admired his wit. Though he was without fortune or other attractions, he drew the best society to his house. He was not really vicious, but few gave him credit for the real goodness of his nature." His friends were awed by this beautiful young prig. We have no difficulty at all in disbelieving the scandalous gossip afterwards put in circulation by her enemies. Ninon de Lanclos, who was a visitor at the Scarron household, indeed asserts that she arranged a rendezvous between Françoise and a gallant, but the intrigue came to nothing on account of the girl's *gaucherie*.

Scarron died in October, 1660, having "Talked for forty years without having anything to say," as his crony, Cyrano de Bergerac, cruelly remarked. His widow seemed likely to relapse into her original indigence, but through the kindness of the Queen-mother, Louis XIV continued to her the pension of 2,700 livres which her husband had enjoyed. We hear little of her during the first nine years of her widowhood. But she kept up the useful connections formed under her husband's roof, frequented the dull ladies aforesaid, and steadily cultivated a reputation for virtue. Women liked her, because, as they had the wit to discern, she did not know what use to make of her beauty.

Yet it was by flying in the face of respectability that she took the right turning in her career. At that time, the relations of the King with the Marquise de Montespan were more or less private. The favourite was expecting her confinement. Mme Scarron was asked to accept the custody of the child as soon as it was born. She professes to have had some curious scruples. "If the child is the King's, well and good; I should hesitate to take charge of Mme de Montespan's; so I can only act upon the King's orders." The King gave the order and she obeyed, conveying the children (for they continued to be born) under her cloak to the house provided for them and her on the road to Vaugirard.



Madame de Maintenon.





An odd sort of office, it seems to us, for such a stickler for virtue. Her motives for accepting it were, no doubt various, as people's motives generally are. To begin with, it may be assumed that she was hard up; next, that she could not afford to offend a powerful friend like Mme de Montespan, still less the King, on whom she was dependent through her pension; finally, though never made to be a wife and never a mother, she loved children. She was indeed the governess born. In obeying her instincts, she was pursuing the road to fortune. Louis XIV was fond of his children and noticed that she, too, was fond of them. But it was some time before he began to like her. He was at the height of his passion for the children's mother. Not seldom, I imagine he detected a pursing of the lips, a discreet but unmistakable air of disapproval on the part of the pretty prim *gouvernante*, as he squeezed the hand of his mistress. But what a lovely complexion the woman had! What a difference, too, between her and the women of the Court! His Majesty spent more and more time talking to Mme Scarron about the children.

In 1673, the children were acknowledged and legitimated. They were installed at the Court, their excellent governess with them. The Queen thought the children very charming, and thought so highly of Françoise that she expressed the wish that she had charge of her own. The Marquise de Montespan began to feel uneasy. She was hearing a great deal too much about the excellent governess. She proposed a marriage between her and the aged Duc de Brancas-Villars. No; Françoise had no idea of re-entering the married state, "which occasions the misery of three-quarters of mankind."

That she might not be tempted away by need, the King gave her a quarter of a million livres, with which she purchased the manor of Maintenon, yielding 15,000 livres per annum. By His Majesty's wish she was known henceforward by the name of this property, but was not created Marchioness till much later in the day. The Court watched with sly amusement this new and most unaccountable interest of the monarch's.

"I am informed," writes Mme de Sevigné, "that His Majesty's conversations with Mme de Maintenon grow longer and more frequent. They now last from six till ten in the morning. The arey discovered seated in great arm-chairs. The King treats her with more consideration and attention than any other friend. She has introduced him into a new country, the country, I mean to say, of friendship and frank, easy intercourse."

Rather dull country, most men would say, in comparison with Armida's garden. The more we know of Mme de Maintenon the harder is it to understand the King's infatuation for her. The harder also it becomes to excuse her attitude towards her benefactress. For by 1676 at latest, she was devoting herself to bring about a breach between Louis and his mistress. That she was urged mainly by her passion for reforming everybody, I do not question; but one who had benefited so substantially by Mme de Montespan's relations with the monarch might have left this missionary enterprise to another. The truth is, that Mme de Maintenon, having been ready to accommodate her conscience with her interests, now saw that her interests fitted in prodigiously well with her conscience. She evinced a warm interest in His Majesty's soul. "M. de Condom," she writes disgustedly, "attempted to convert them, but has only brought them together again. All these plans are useless. Only Père la Chaise (the King's Confessor) can bring about a separation. Over and over again he has deplored the King's sins. Why does he not absolutely refuse him the Sacrament? Père la Chaise is an honest man, but the atmosphere of the Court spoils the sternest virtue and softens the most inflexible severity."

Mme de Maintenon need not have worked so hard to oust her former friend and helper. Louis had tired of Mme de Montespan and had transferred his love. The discarded marquise burst in upon her ex-governess. "Are you, then, the King's new mistress?" she demanded. "You imagine he wants three?" sneered the devout lady. "Yes," came the retort, "I am his mistress by repute, Mademoiselle de

Fontanges his mistress in fact, and you are the mistress of his affections."

The breach came in 1677, and Louis, it is said, charged Maintenon with the mission of announcing that all was over to her late employer. Not content with this success, the "mistress of the King's affections" applied herself to converting Mlle de Fontanges, extorting from the harassed girl the cry, "You think it is as easy to rid oneself of a passion as it is of a chemise!" (Now what on earth is this thing called passion Françoise must often have asked herself.) But nature was again on the side of orthodox morality. Louis' latest mistress died, and left him trembling at the prospect of death and the judgment.

It might have been thought that in such a mood a man would turn to his lawful wife, forsaking all other women. That was not the royal way. Louis renounced the lusts of the flesh, but his spiritual adultery with Françoise de Maintenon went on. The poor Queen had, of course, no objection—she would have been very much surprised and embarrassed by a resumption of conjugal relations with her consort. His devotion to the middle-aged widow relieved her from so painful a trial. And on July 3rd, 1683, her Majesty died in the platonic favourite's arms.

Within a few months Louis asked Mme de Maintenon to marry him. The proposal had the warm support of Père la Chaise and all the spiritual forces around the King. Scarron's widow, caught in the religious revival which agitated French society at that time, had become a pillar of the Catholic Church. She was not only all for morality, but wholeheartedly with the Church against which her grandfather had contended. Personally ambitious she was not, in any great degree. "I think I love the King," she says in a letter, "as I love my brother. I wish to see them both perfect that they may be blessed by God. The King has honoured me by writing me two very affectionate letters, to which I have replied as a Christian should,



“He wishes to marry me, but he will still be the King, and what can a subject do against a King? He loves me now and has done so for eleven years past, but he also loved La Vallière, Mademoiselle de Fontanges and Mme de Montespan with passion. I have reached an age when all personal attractions begin to fail. Although by a miracle, I have preserved my beauty till now, I must expect it to vanish at any moment, and I shall very soon become an object from which people will immediately avert their gaze.”

Still, as I am willing to believe, in order to keep the King's soul safe, she yielded. The marriage, it is stated, but not proved, took place in January, 1684, at midnight, in the chapel of Versailles. Père la Chaise married them, in presence of the Archbishop of Paris, of Louvois, the Duc de Noailles, and others. They drove on to Maintenon, where the nuptial Mass was celebrated. On her return to the palace, the bride was put in possession of a magnificent chamber, next to the King's. Next day she rode in his coach, seated by his side. At the time of the marriage she was forty-nine, the King a few years younger.

They lived together twenty-one years, happily and peacefully. She was always his wife, never the Queen, but never rose to receive princesses. Of Louis' soul she continued to take good care, but she had no control over his mind. She would sit by, knitting, in silence while he deliberated with his Ministers. Occasionally he invited her advice by the query, “And what does your solidity think about it?” To her influence is attributed the revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the persecution of the Protestants which followed. Undoubtedly she rejoiced at this evidence of the King's religious fervour, but the responsibility is his alone. Not that Mme de Maintenon displayed any compassion for the co-religionists of the only friend she had known in childhood. She got hold of that friend's children and cajoled and threatened them into adopting the state religion. Hearing of some peculiarly fiendish atrocities committed against the Huguenots, she

expresses a tepid regret, but doubts whether she ought to attempt to curb the righteous fury of the persecutors.

At the death of her husband she appears in the same cold inhuman light. She was with him, helping him with his soul, till he lost consciousness ; then " Reason told her that she could no longer be of use to the King," and she left him to finish his dying without her. Her departure is hailed by her few admirers as evidence of tact. It certainly spared those charged with transmitting the sceptre any awkward quibbles about the exact status of the King's widow.

She retired to St. Cyr, the college which she had founded for the daughters of impoverished nobles and officers, and took on once more her native rôle of schoolmistress. The Regent Orleans allowed her a yearly pension of forty-eight thousand livres. She did not live very long to enjoy it, dying on April 15th, 1719 (four years after Louis), at the age of eighty-four.

She had often said she wished to die. Her brother asked her if she was engaged to be married to God Almighty. For a long while she had confessed to being ashamed of having lived so long. And, indeed, such people as she can get very little satisfaction out of life. Her career will call in most people's eyes for no apology. She clung fast to the most conventional standards of rectitude. If she persecuted Protestants in France, it is not to be doubted that she would have persecuted Papists with equal ardour had she been a contemporary and subject of Queen Elizabeth. Hers was a cold, solitary nature, which had to borrow light from outside teachers. Vices, she had none ; she possessed, even to an eminent degree, the qualities of detachment and simplicity. Having attained the place of King's wife, she did not seek to enrich herself or to squander the State's revenues. That bad man, the Regent Orleans, said of her : " She has done good to everyone and harm to none." That was not quite so ; but she was as incapable of malice as she was of love.

## VII

## A GERMAN MISALLIANCE

"HERE, at Venice, ennui is unknown, my dear marshal. I wish you were with me. I wager that you would be in no hurry to return to Germany."

In these words, we are told, Duke George William of Hanover replied to his subjects' earnest appeal that he would return to his own dominions, addressed to him through Grapendorff, the Marshal of his household. His Highness can hardly be blamed. In the middle of the seventeenth century Venice was the brightest spot in all Europe. There a man could do what he liked so long as he did not meddle with local politics. There a tired prince might forget the Thirty Years' War, the Peace of Westphalia, the Fronde, and the usurpation of Cromwell. There, myriads of delightful ladies were at hand to charm his senses and help him exhaust his revenues. There, the universal use of the mask and the domino screened him from censorious eyes. The prospect of the lagoons pleased the Duke of Hanover vastly more than the dreary heaths and flat landscapes of his ancestral states.

His answer occasioned much murmuring among his people. We do not know whether they felt the need of his fatherly guidance; but they not unreasonably objected to their hard-earned money being spent in a foreign land. So when His Highness paid them a fleeting visit to raise further supplies he was told that no more money would be forthcoming till he settled down. He must take a wife.

This intimation was most distasteful to George William. He believed himself to be a confirmed bachelor. Even the chains of love had proved too heavy for him. A little while before, he had renounced his Venetian mistress, the lovely Buccolini, though he shouldered a father's responsibilities towards their boy and took him home, to make him in after years his Master of the Horse. But since marry he must, he bethought him of a penniless lass with a long pedigree, whom he had met some years before. This was Sophia, the daughter of that Elector Palatine who was hunted out of Bohemia, and his wife, our Elizabeth Stuart, the Queen of Hearts. No one would have called Sophia even the Jill of Hearts. She was waspish and grasping, pitted with small-pox. She was now twenty-nine years of age and living very dolefully at her brother's court at Heidelberg. She accepted the Hanoverian Duke's offer with something like enthusiasm.

From Heidelberg, His Highness travelled on to Venice, to bid farewell, no doubt, to the joys of bachelordom. But arrived once more in his familiar haunts, he discovered his repugnance for the married state to be invincible. He turned to his well-liked brother and comrade, Ernest Augustus, and made a startling pronouncement: "I will not marry Sophia. You must marry her instead."

Royal personages are notoriously more amenable to these family arrangements than the common herd. Ernest Augustus was ready to do anything, so long as his interests were thereby advanced. As to Sophia, she admitted in her old age, that "A good establishment was all she cared for, and that one brother was the same to her as the other, provided he could offer her this." The attitude of this high-born lady, it will be gathered, did not differ materially from a prostitute's except as regards her price. And this George William, as his ransom, was ready to pay. He executed a deed solemnly binding himself never to marry, and confirming the succession to his states inalienably to Ernest Augustus and his potential heirs. It was a bad deed. George William was no celibate,



as he well knew, and he had now pledged himself to bastardise any and all children that might be born to him. From that deed much evil was to spring.

Sophia and Ernest Augustus, well content, set up house at Hanover ; and there, after a little while, George William felt himself constrained to join them. Possibly the Hanoverian Diet was again bothering him ; possibly the delights of Venice palled on him, without his brother by to share them. Sophia hints that she was the attraction, that the Duke had repented of his surrender of her, and vied with his brother for her favours. Trouble was averted by the removal of the married couple to Osnabrück. Of this place, Ernest Augustus had become lay bishop. Under a provision of the Treaty of Westphalia, the Bishopric was governed by a Catholic bishop and a Protestant prince in rotation—an arrangement, remarks Mr. W. H. Wilkins, which resulted in some odd bishops, our " brave old Duke of York," of Valenciennes fame, being the last.

The departure of his brother left George William lonely and without a domestic hearth. The restless fit once more took him. He wandered about, and began to feel that he was getting on. In the winter of 1663-1664, when he was just turning forty, he went to visit his youngest brother, John Frederick, at Cassel. He found this brother, ordinarily the gravest and most studious of the family, very much pre-occupied with the charms of a French lady who was visiting the Court of the Landgrave, in the train of the Princesse de Tarente. Very soon George William was in love with her, too—perhaps for the first, and certainly for the last time, in his life.

Thirty years ago there was living in Paris (and I am sure I hope he is living there still) a M. Henri d'Olbreuse, who was cousin, twelve times removed, of Queen Victoria. He was descended from the father of Eléonore d'Olbreuse, the lady-in-waiting who had won the hearts of the two Guelphic princes and who became the ancestress of the actual King and Queen of England.

The business of blackening a frail woman's memory, which was generally discharged in earlier times by monkish and venal chroniclers, has been ably undertaken in her case by her lifelong enemy, the Electress Sophia, and the latter's niece, the Duchess of Orleans. These exalted ladies were not, of course, so much concerned to asperse her morals as her lineage—a much more serious thing. "This little clot of earth," the Electress was to style her. "She comes from a French family, and therefore from a fraud," wrote her German niece, who had married a mere French royal duke. "This Duchess is of low extraction; she would have accounted it an honour to marry Colin, Monsieur's first *valet-de-chambre*." To us, the pedigree of Mademoiselle d'Olbreuse does not seem to matter much; but her countryman and biographer, the Vicomte Horric de Beaucaire, has been at pains to prove that she came of an undoubtedly noble family of Poitou, which had become impoverished through its attachment to the Protestant religion. Poverty, therefore, and not "low extraction," may explain Eléonore's want of education as revealed in her letters. Her spelling is remarkable; but it has the merit of being startlingly phonetic.

The date of her birth is given as January 3rd, 1639; the place, the Château of Olbreuse, between Niort and La Rochelle. Her father was Alexander Desmier, Lord of Olbreuse; her mother, Jacqueline Poussard de Vandr  . Her birth evidently obtained for her the post of Demoiselle d'Honneur to a great Huguenot lady, the Duchess de la Tremoille. Thence she was passed on to this lady's daughter-in-law, the Princesse de Tarente, herself the daughter of the Landgrave of Cassel. (The Tremoilles got their Italian title and with it a shadowy claim to the throne of Naples from the daughter of Frederick II, King of Naples.)

When she met George William, El  onore was close on twenty-five. "What part had she played at the Court of France?" asks the Vicomte de Beaucaire. "It is not easy to say with the few documents at our disposal. She did not

continue there very long ; she was not rich. She did not find there the marriage of which she no doubt dreamed. In the light society of the court, her beauty and her wit were remarked ; and beyond question the rigid virtue of the Huguenots highly displeased several gentlemen in search of gallant adventures. The spiteful outburst credited to the Comte de Gramont—‘ Now we are sick of her at court, she is still good enough for a German prince ’—seems to indicate that he or his friends found the gates shut against them.”

George William hoped for better luck. He got Sophia, of all persons, to invite the captivating French girl to join her household ; but Eléonore refused, and departed with her princess for the Hague. George William followed. Poor John Frederick, obliged to accompany the Osnabrück people to Venice, continued to correspond with her throughout the year 1664. We are regretfully drawn to the conclusion, from reading the correspondence, that Eléonore d’Olbreuse was playing one brother off against the other, and angling for a definite proposal. By the end of the year, she seems to have despaired of this, for on December 20th she wrote to her unhappy suitor : “ When your serene Highness is married, I shall ask you to place me at your court in the train of your princess, as you have promised. I hope,” she continues, “ that you will keep your word, no matter what they have been writing to you about me. They have said horrid things about me, which aren’t true, though they do come from the princess. I can’t help telling your serene Highness how much I hope that you will consider me a respectable girl and that there is no one more zealous and devoted to your service than your very humble and obedient servant—d’Olbreuse. P.S.—Duke George William is expected here any day.”

The princess referred to in the above cannot be identified, but according to a rare contemporary document, called the “ *Avanture Historique*,” printed at Paris in 1679, to which the Vicomte de Beaucaire attaches some faith, she had set her cap, so to speak, at George William. Her rivalry was taken so

seriously, we see, by poor Eléonore that she thought it worth while to bespeak for herself a situation in her admirer's future household. The postscript was of course designed as a fillip to his ardour. By this time Mademoiselle d'Olbreuse must have realised that the two Dukes, like those in Gilbert's delicious ballad, "did not offer marriage rites, but only guilty splendour." George William, disregarding the princess, pressed his suit. The girl's employer aided him. "So many proofs of constancy and affection on the part of an amiable and seductive prince," says our French apologist, "were well calculated to undermine the resistance of Eléonore. Morals in those days, at least as regards women, were easier than now. The poor daughter of a gentleman ruined by the war and proscribed on account of his religion, deprived of the affection of her mother, whom she had lost in early childhood, and whose place a stranger had taken, uncertain as to her future, confiding in the promises of a prince, easy-going, it is true, but notorious for his fidelity to his word and the loyalty of his character, Eléonore in the end yielded."

A fête given on her twenty-sixth birthday, by the Princesse de Tarente at the Hague, may have been the occasion or the celebration of her surrender. George William presented her with a medallion of himself. John Frederick took his defeat in such bad part that two months later, upon the death of the eldest of the brothers, Christian Louis, Duke of Zell,\* he seized upon his possessions to the exclusion of the next heir. George William had to leave his latest conquest to assert his legal rights. Finally peace was patched up between the brothers by a curious and puzzling arrangement. The younger got Hanover and the elder took in exchange his late brother's Dukedom of Zell,

This being settled, George William's first care was to establish his French love as *mattresse en titre*. His sister-in-law was quite ready to aid him. It was only by keeping him

---

\* Now spelt Celle.



occupied with mistresses, that she could hope to hold him to his vow of (formal) celibacy. Left stranded by the Princess de Tarente, Eléonore received an invitation from the Bishopess Sophia to visit her at the little palace of Iburg. She was brought in a coach and six and met at the foot of the grand staircase by Sophia. Coffee and salt biscuits were served to her as a special mark of honour.

She made a favourable impression on the woman who was soon to develop into her worst enemy. Envious rivals had pictured her as "giddy and boisterous, smacking and pinching her associates to win applause. . . . I found her quite otherwise," says Sophia. "She was serious and self-contained, she spoke little but agreeably. Her face was very beautiful and her figure tall. I found her distinctly amiable." She reminded the Bishopess very much of her predecessor in George William's favour, the "Signora" Buccolini.

Perhaps the manner of her reception had revived Eléonore's hopes. "Olbreuse thinks you are going to marry her," said Ernest Augustus to his brother. "If she thinks that," replied the Duke of Zell, "she had better go back whence she came. I shall never make such a fool of myself." Instead of which, he invited Eléonore to become his permanent mistress. Probably by now she had been told of the engagement entered into by her lover. She consented. Whether at her request, or as a voluntary guarantee of his loyalty, a deed of concubinage was actually drawn up and signed by George William, Eléonore, Ernest Augustus, and Sophia.

The text of this unique contract is as follows: "The love which I bear my brother having determined me never to marry, for his advantage and that of his children, from which resolution I shall never depart, and as Mademoiselle d'Olbreuse has agreed to live with me, I promise never to abandon her, and to allow her 2,000 crowns a year, and 6,000 after my death, with which she and I promise to be content; and having both of us agreed to this with my brother, he has promised to sign together with me."

This "marriage of conscience" took place in November, 1665. "It is a marriage in the eyes of God," said someone, upon which Sophia caustically remarked that she didn't mind so long as it was not a marriage in the eyes of men.

To make her position still more regular, Eléonore was styled the Lady of Harburg. On taking up her residence in the ducal schloss at Zell, she sent for her sister, Angélique, to be her lady-in-waiting. The Baroness van Amstel, writing in the *Nineteenth Century* (1898) tells us, on what authority I know not: "She was not admitted to the ducal table (presumably when Sophia was visiting the court of Zell) but she was allowed to sit on a low chair without anything to eat before her, and at a respectful distance from the Duchess, while George William, whose appetite was not to be disturbed by such a trifling circumstance, devoured his meal on the right of the lady sovereign. The 'Dame de Harburg' was, however, granted permission to remain seated before any princes who might happen to be present.

"This etiquette was painful only to her pride, for she says in one of her letters to her uncle that her heart was sadly turned by the enormous dishes brought before the princely eaters, their menu chiefly consisting of a queer compound of honey, beer and onions, eaten in bowls; greasy sausages thrown in lumps on red cabbage, and a farinaceous mess with ginger and cloves; and all this was abundantly soaked in a cloudy, heavy ale, of which they drank glass after glass. 'Now,' would the fair Duchess exclaim after her plentiful meal, energetically wiping her face up to the ears with a stiff napkin, 'you may go, my dear, and help your angelic sister with her saucepans.' The fact was well known that the 'Dame de Harburg' and the future Countess of Reuss had, behind their dressing rooms, a little kitchen of their own, where they prepared themselves dainty sauces and light dishes—to the great disgust of the cooks in the ducal kitchen."

Here we seem to be reading, rather, of Eléonore's life at Sophia's own court, or at the Duke's before she had formally

accepted his protection. For she writes from Zell herself, on March 14th, 1666: "You would like to see our household. It is the best in the world. Yours does not come near it." Higher up she says: "I am the happiest woman in the world. They may say what they like about my not having been married in church, I shall never repent it. It's one's troth that makes the marriage. His Highness has pledged me his, before all the witnesses to our contract, binding himself never to have any wife but me."

A prince's word is not usually his bond. But George William kept his. A reformed rake, we often hear, makes the best husband. He was passionately in love with his unofficial wife. The birth of their child, the ill-starred Sophia Dorothea, filled him with joy. The confinement had been a long and painful one. Eléonore feared that her beauty was gone for ever. George William at this moment became a prodigy of tenderness and dispelled her anxiety. Luckily her fears proved to be groundless. She recovered her health, and with it the charms which had first won his love.

As much fuss was made over the child as if it had been born in wedlock, sneered Sophia. Nevertheless, she was well pleased, no doubt, that the child was a girl and not a boy. The Frenchwoman—the "Signora," as her enemy loved to call her—feigning to confound her with George William's previous mistress—gave no trouble. Occupied with her little girl, she was quite happy. Her brother had come from France to rouse her to a sense of the indignity of her position and to get the Duke to marry her. He failed. Eléonore, for all the Huguenot virtue with which the Vicomte credits her, appears to have been the kind of woman to whom the status of mistress or concubine is not repugnant. She was treated with deference by the people of the little duchy. She began to surround herself with French people, especially Huguenots. George William was always away at the wars now, fighting the Swedes and her own countrymen. He came back covered with laurels to lavish caresses upon his consort and their child. Upon

both he had made handsome settlements. Little Sophia Dorothea was already an heiress.

With a Frenchwoman's shrewdness, Eléonore knew when she was well off. And "the Lady of Harburg" she might have remained till the day of her death, but for the promptings of the Baron von Schutz, who became Chancellor of the Duchy in 1670. To him it seemed monstrous that his master's well-loved consort should be shuffled out of the way whenever royal personages paid a visit to his court, that her rich and pretty daughter should be on no better footing than her half-brother, the Venetian youth. Eléonore, though so little ambitious, could not fail to be interested in schemes for her own and her child's aggrandisement.

Von Schutz looked round for an ally. He found one in Duke Anthony Ulric, of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, the representative of a branch of the Guelphic house at daggers drawn with Hanover and Osnabrück. The Duke not only hated Sophia, but he was desperately poor. Probably at the astute Minister's suggestion, he approached George William: "Your daughter's money would be very useful to my family. We could marry her to my son, Augustus Frederick, if the bar sinister could be got over somehow."

His daughter to be one day a duchess! The father, we hope, was pleased at the prospect and glad of an excuse to legitimate her. Just then his star was very much in the ascendant. He had beaten the French smartly at Consarbruck, had relieved Treves, and taken Marshal de Créquy prisoner. Emperor Leopold at Vienna was in the mood to reward so useful a lieutenant. Certainly he would do something for the "Lady of Harburg" and the little girl. On July 22nd, 1674, by an imperial patent, Eléonore Desmier d'Olbreuse was created Countess of Wilhelmsburg with remainder to her daughter. More: not to be outdone by her husband, the Empress bestowed on the Duke of Zell's mistress the Order of Virtue, hitherto reserved for persons of princely rank.

The Bishoress of Osnabrück, when she heard of these



things, was beside herself with rage. "That little clod of earth!" That fool of a brother-in-law of hers would be equal to marrying the woman next, in spite of his promises. And that was what he did. So frightened at first of Sophia's wrath that he actually enquired of Louis XIV whether his consort and her daughter might reckon in case of need on a safe asylum in France, he was so far encouraged by his own overlord's marks of favour that on April 2nd, 1676, he was married privately by a pastor in presence of Von Schutz and Duke Antony Ulric to the woman who had been his wife in fact for eleven years. And on the same day, the ten-year-old Sophia Dorothea was betrothed to the hereditary prince of Brunswick Wolfenbüttel.

Three weeks later the imperial envoy at the ducal court saluted George William's wife as Duchess of Zell.

It was a great hour for Eléonore d'Olbreuse. The least malicious of women, she must have chuckled over the mortification of the patronising and supercilious Bishopess. But in after years, she and her daughter must have bitterly regretted that she did not leave well alone. Later on, we hear that her empire over the Duke declined. It declined, I fancy, from the moment of their official marriage, which George William himself seems never to have been over anxious to bring about. To the retired roué, the gallant of Venice, who had made such sacrifices to avoid matrimony, a mistress must have been more interesting than a wife. The priest's benediction dispelled the meretricious charm of Eléonore. She was now her Serene Highness, his Duchess, a tall, stately woman, thirty-seven years old. Perhaps George William, looking at her after the belated ceremony, wondered where he should now spend his evenings.

And the daughter, now become a princess?—ageing in her dreary prison at Ahlden, how often she must have wished that the bar sinister had been left upon her escutcheon. The daughter of the Lady of Harburg or even of the Countess of Wilhelmsburg might have become the wife of the man from



Eleonore d'Olbreuse.





whom her princely rank separated her ; for Königsmark had met her in her childhood and, as he avers, loved her.

Unwittingly, Eléonore helped her daughter towards her doom. For she taught her romantic, middle-class ideas of conduct, unbecoming to her later station. For instance, that a husband should be faithful to his wife, and that his infidelity might conceivably dispense the wife from her vows. How repulsive was such a morality to people born in the purple we gather from a letter written after the final catastrophe by Her Highness of Orleans : “ How could this Duchess expect her daughter to be otherwise than unfortunate with the ideas in which she educated her ? Where in the world is a prince to be found who loves his wife only, and has no one else ? If their wives on that account were to lead the same kind of life that they do, no one could be sure that their children were the true heirs. Doesn’t this Duchess know that a wife’s honour consists in giving herself to nobody but her husband, whereas for the husband there is no shame in having mistresses but only in being made a cuckold ? ”

That last indignity was escaped by the Prince of Wolfenbüttel, who was killed in action within a few months of his betrothal. Sophia, we suppose, rejoiced at this check to the pretensions of the rival branch. She had more substantial grounds for rejoicing in the death of John Frederick, who died, as she tells us, “ glass in hand, as a true German should.” She was not without a cynical humour of her own, this Sophia. In accordance with the family compact, Hanover, George William’s ancient duchy, now fell to Ernest Augustus, who thus became the most powerful prince of the House of Brunswick. But, *l’appetit vient en mangeant*—the new Duke at once began to cast covetous looks on the remaining fragment of the ancestral dominions. If George William’s daughter should marry a prince, was it likely that upon her father’s death, he would consent to her supersession in virtue of that old agreement ?

And Sophia Dorothea seemed certain to marry a prince. Every day rumour linked her name with a new one. She had



indeed been born out of wedlock, like William the Conqueror, but her dowry, it was whispered, would be prodigious. "Money nowadays covers any amount of shame," sneered the Prince of Orange; a remark which came with an ill-grace from the husband of Anne Hyde's daughter. Meantime, George William seemed as anxious as his brother for the final consolidation of their territories. "If my girl were to marry your son?" The idea was broached. Their Hanoverian Highnesses scouted it, no doubt, at first. "D'Olbreuse's daughter is no mate for our George Louis," we can hear Sophia exclaiming. George Louis, known to us as George I, did not think so, either. Still, the more the project was examined, the more advantageous it appeared. "The pill," writes Ernest Augustus, "is difficult to swallow, but if it is gilded with a hundred thousand crowns a year, I will take it eyes shut."

A preliminary understanding between the brother Dukes was reached on July 13th, 1680. The cousins were to marry. While the fathers wrangled for two weary years over the marriage settlements, visits were exchanged between the courts of Zell and Hanover, there were fêtes, banquets, masked balls. Sophia seems to have made a genuine effort to smother her old enmity towards the French woman. In this story, the "Electress Sophia," as she was afterwards known to the English people, does not cut at all an engaging figure, but it must be admitted that she behaved better than most modern princesses would towards a woman of Eléonore's late ambiguous antecedents.

There was, of course, as much policy as good nature in this change of front. No sooner had the court of Hanover been converted to the idea of the alliance than the Duchess of Zell and the person most interested, Sophia Dorothea, manifested their objection to it. The prospective bridegroom was as little liked in Germany as he was, later on, in England. Eléonore favoured the pretensions of another prince of the Wolfenbüttel line. She was on the point of swaying her obstinate husband to her view when Sophia made a dramatic

descent upon Zell by night and secured the prize for her son.

So in the evening of December 2nd, 1682, Sophia Dorothea, in the seventeenth year of her age, was sacrificed on the dynastic altar and married at the place where she was born, to her twenty-two-years-old cousin of Hanover. The story of the resultant tragedy has been told elsewhere and in many tongues. The seeds of that tragedy lay, as Sophia and her niece of Orleans would have gladly agreed, in the bride's temperament. She had not the fishlike nature which makes the perfect princess. She objected to her dull, cold husband's mistresses and found therein an excuse, if her heart wanted any, for giving herself to her girlhood's lover.

But this was not till she had spent nine unhappy years at the court of Hanover and borne a son and a daughter to her husband. Königsmark re-entered her life somewhere in 1691—on July 1st, 1694, he was murdered as he was coming away from her chamber and a few hours after Sophia Dorothea was placed in confinement, never again to emerge from it.

George William is freely praised by various historians as a man of warm, honourable and generous nature. Of this, we have had little evidence so far. In order to enjoy the licence of the bachelor state, he gave away his children's birthright; he then appears to have carried on a flirtation with the very woman he had refused to marry—now his brother's wife; he was quite content that his daughter should be born out of wedlock, and he had to be jockeyed by a Minister into marrying her mother. Thereafter, he seems always to have been more concerned for the future of his dynasty than for the welfare of his own flesh and blood. Sophia Dorothea's miserable marriage was largely of his making; and now, when his beloved brother showed him the proofs of her adultery, no impulse of fatherly tenderness softened his indignation at the disgrace she had brought on his house. He swore he would never see this unworthy daughter again, and he never did. He was seventy years

old. Passion no longer warmed his frame, love had passed out of his imagining. That he regretted having married the scarcely noble Frenchwoman I can readily believe. That he traced his daughter's downfall to her mother's unmoral character and evil example, is likely enough.

Sophia Dorothea was divorced from the Electoral Prince George on December 28th and refused permission ever to marry again. They gave her, indeed, no chance of doing so. Till the day of her death, she was kept a prisoner at the castle of Ahlden in her father's dominions. She was styled the Duchess of Ahlden and provided with a household becoming her rank; but she was not allowed to move more than six miles from the castle or to receive any visits or letters without the sanction of her jailer. Worst of all, she was never again allowed to set eyes on her children—afterwards George II of England and the Queen of Prussia. Her husband and his father perhaps reminded themselves of the fate of Anne Boleyn and Katherine Howard, and congratulated themselves on their leniency.

As to Eléonore, she seems to have done her utmost for her daughter at the time of the divorce proceedings. But this was not much. Her influence over her aged husband had entirely departed. It was probably by his command that she continued to visit the Hanoverian court and was present at the marriages of her grandchildren. It was four years before the hard-hearted old man gave her leave to visit her daughter. Thenceforward, those visits were all that the two women had to live for.

George William died in 1705, at the age of eighty-one. Feeling that his end was near, he had announced his intention of seeing his daughter once more. He was too late. Since she was imprisoned within his own duchy he might with his dying breath have ordered her to be set at liberty and conveyed to a neutral state. Instead, he left her a large fortune—a strange gift to one who could not go out of sight of her prison walls. But harsh and unbending though he was, his death

deprived his widow and his daughter of their only natural protector. They saw themselves left to the mercy of the court of Hanover.

In the result, their lot was neither better nor worse than before. The little dukedom of Zell was now absorbed, once for all, in the bigger state. Eléonore returned to her dower house at Luneburg, separated by miles of heath from Ahlden, which, however, she continued to visit with regularity. From time to time, prayers for forgiveness were addressed to Ernest Augustus and his implacable son. They were vain ; so were Eléonore's rather timid attempts to invoke the good offices of various foreign princes. The years dragged on, bringing no change to the captive of Ahlden. The husband from whom she was divorced became King of England—she was never greeted as its queen. Her son once galloped to within sight of her window, but never got any farther. Nor did his filial piety, or more likely hatred of his father, prompt him to any more active display of affection than keeping his mother's portrait in his room.

Weighed down by her eighty-three years, Eléonore d'Olbreuse drove in her coach-and-six across the heath to see her daughter. It was for the last time, and she well knew it. A day or two after her return to Luneburg, on February 5th, 1722, she breathed her last.

Nearly five years later (November 13th, 1726) her daughter joined her. They were laid side by side without any ceremony in the ducal vault at Zell. All around them are the pretentious effigies of the princes of the Brunswick house ; but such travellers as come to the little Hanoverian town ask to see only the plain coffins of those two women. Who knows or cares where the Electress Sophia is buried, whose heart rejoiced at the crowning humiliation of the Olbreuse through her daughter ? "Posterity," concludes the Vicomte de Beaucaire, "has sometimes antipathies and sympathies as invincible as hers ; it has amply avenged the wrongs of the two princesses of Zell."



## VIII

THE NIGHT-TIME CZAR (THE EMPRESS ELIZABETH AND  
RAZUMOVSKI),

FOR a considerable fraction of the eighteenth century, Russia was ruled by women, and did very well under them. Two at least of these Empresses, Elizabeth and Catherine II, were richly endowed with those abilities which men call masculine, and with those appetites which women prefer to call masculine, also. Elizabeth, the daughter of the great Peter, reminds one in certain particulars of her English namesake, whose title of "Virgin Queen," however, she deserved as little as she would have coveted it. Both women inherited a large share of ability from a ruthless, strong-willed father; both suffered rather than profited in their youth by their nearness to the throne; both inflicted crushing blows on their country's chief enemy; under both, art and literature bloomed afresh; neither, finally, left a child to succeed her.

Elizabeth Romanov was born in 1709, the daughter of Peter the Great by his famous wife and former concubine, Martha Skovronskaya, afterwards styled Catherine I. Upon her mother's death, the crown passed first to a grandson of Peter by his first wife, then to Anna Ivanovna, the great Czar's niece. Russia at the time of Elizabeth's birth was in a social state rather reminding one of the Turkey of to-day. The people were being hurried towards a civilisation which they certainly, and their pioneers, probably, did not understand. "Become Europeans—turn your back on Asia!" their sovereign fiercely adjured them. The men cut off their

beards, powdered their heads, and went on flogging their serfs. The women of the aristocracy learnt French, sent to Paris for their gowns, and suited their private behaviour to the Parisian modes, while they went on praying to the ikons. Perhaps this meant no profound change in morals; Russian Christians do not appear at any time to have deemed chastity the one essential to salvation. Elizabeth and her beloved sister, Anne, were taught the French language by a certain Mme Latour. Later on, Elizabeth picked up a colloquial knowledge of German, Swedish and Italian. The thoroughness of her education may be gauged by the fact that to the day of her death she believed it was possible to go to England without crossing the water. But this was not entirely the fault of her instructors. The Czar's daughter hated both reading and writing.

The French governess is at any rate credited with having taught her the morals of the Regency—if her intensely sensual nature stood in need of any such direction. Upon the departure of her much-loved sister to marry the Duke of Holstein, Elizabeth was left without any near relations. She was practically banished from court by her half-nephew, Peter II, at the instance of the Dolgoruki faction. So she consoled herself in her teens by taking lovers. One of the earliest of these, Alexander Buturlin, was promptly removed and sent to the Ukraine by the Czar. At this time, the princess was about eighteen. Presently we hear of her cousin, Simon Narishkin. It was even rumoured that she was secretly married to him. He, too, was exiled. His place was taken by Chubin, a sergeant in the Seminovski regiment, who was even more unfortunate. First imprisoned in a little “ease” dungeon, wherein he could neither stand upright nor lie down, he was then banished to Kamtchatka, minus his tongue. Elizabeth bewailed his horrible fate, writing verses and threatening to take the veil.

By this time Peter II had been succeeded by Anna Ivanovna. That grim Empress allowed Elizabeth to come to

court, the better I presume, to keep an eye on her. We catch several glimpses of the princess in her twenties in the letters of a lively Englishwoman, the wife successively of the two British consuls, Ward and Rondeau. "The Princess Elizabeth" (she writes from St. Petersburg), "who is, you know, a daughter of Peter I is very handsome. She is very fair, with light brown hair, large sprightly blue eyes, fine teeth, and a pretty mouth. She is inclined to be fat, but is very genteel, and dances better than anyone I ever saw. She speaks German, French and Italian, is extremely gay, and talks to everyone in a very proper manner in the circle, but hates the ceremony of court."

Here is a later portrait, dated 1735. "You hear I often meet the Princess Elizabeth, and she has done me the honour to call at my house, and you cry, 'How she seems? has she greatness of soul? how does she bear another upon the throne?' You think it easy to answer all these things, but I have not your penetration. She does me the honour to admit my visits frequently, and sometimes sends for me; and to confess the truth, I have a veneration for her and fondness in my heart that make the visit to her a thing of pleasure not of ceremony. She has an affability and sweetness of behaviour that irresistibly inspires love and respect. In public she has an unaffected gaiety and a certain air of giddiness that seems entirely to possess her whole mind; but in private I have heard her talk in such a strain of good sense and steady reasoning that I am persuaded the other behaviour is but a feint; but she seems easy. I say 'seems' for who knows the heart? In short, she is an amiable creature, and though I think the throne very worthily filled, yet I cannot help wishing she were to be the successor at least."

This was written in 1735 and shows perspicacity on Mrs. Rondeau's part. For nobody else at that time credited the daughter of Peter the Great with any statesmanlike qualities. People judged her not only to be giddy, but saw that she was

lazy and greedy and apparently wholly given up to sensual enjoyment.

Four years before this, one of the officers of the Empress Anna's household chanced to be travelling in the Ukraine on business connected with the imperial wine cellar. At a village inn, his ear was caught by a most melodious bass voice ; it belonged, he found, to a young man named Alexis Razumovski, the son of a village drunkard. Special stress is laid on good singing even in the humblest Russian parishes, and Alexis had combined the duties of a shepherd with those of chorister at his village church. The court official promptly carried the young peasant off to St. Petersburg and conscripted him in the choir of the Imperial chapel, being handsomely rewarded for his discrimination by the Empress.

A certain court lady, Nastasia Narishkin, while at her devotions, presumably being moved by this new and beautiful voice, enquired after the singer. He proved (to her eyes) to be as beautiful as his voice. " He was, in effect, handsome," writes the Marquise de la Chetarderie, with a black beard (we thought this ornament had been forbidden in eighteenth century Russia), well-defined but delicate features, a tall, well-knit figure, and broad shoulders. Whatever of loutishness remained in him was modified and corrected by a course of dancing and deportment which he was forced to undergo by his new patron. For Nastasia Narishkin, a woman, as we are told, of insatiable appetites, had at once taken him for her favourite. It does not appear that she kept him very long. She was one day so indiscreet as to talk about him to the Princess Elizabeth. The chorister's merits as a lover (the word is used in its least refined sense) were so extraordinary that Her Highness resolved to appropriate him. " With this intention she assisted several times at divine service at the chapel." Opportunely, perhaps, Alexis lost his voice and shortly afterwards appeared as master of the princess's household.

Elizabeth was only doing as all princesses did. I do not



see that her conduct calls for any apology. Unlike that German Duchess of Orleans, she would certainly have denied that there was one law for the man and another for the woman. That she would be allowed to choose a husband for herself was very unlikely—Anna Ivanovna was not anxious for the daughter of Peter the Great to marry; and in any event, it seems to me less degrading for a woman to take a lover than to submit to be married to a man she does not care about and who does not care about her, as is so often the fate of princesses.

Razumovski was a simple good-natured soul, who took not the least interest in public events—just the lover for her cousin that the Empress could have wished. Elizabeth laughed and grew fat, having apparently no other ambition than to enjoy herself. But in the year 1741, little Mrs. Rondeau was justified of her opinion. Anna Ivanovna was dead. The Imperial diadem had passed, nominally, to a child, styled Ivan III, and the chief authority in the state to that child's mother, Anna Leopoldovna. The regent was unpopular—unpopular, that is to say, with the majority of the few people who had any say or share at all in the government of those millions of Russians. Instigated by various persons, among them a French physician named Lestocq, and assuredly not by Alexis, the last surviving Romanov shook off her lethargy and on the night of December 6th, 1741, with the aid of the Preobrazhenski regiment, seized the little Czar and his parents in their beds and declared herself Empress. The revolution was at once acquiesced in. The dispossessed family were sent to drag out a wretched existence on the shores of the White Sea. Their most prominent partisans, including the distinguished general Munnich, were sentenced to death and brought to the block, to be reprieved at the eleventh hour and sent to Siberia. On the whole the change of government was the triumph of the Russian as opposed to the German factions. To crush the rising power of Prussia, then ruled by Frederick the Great, was Elizabeth Romanov's settled policy.

Alexis Razumovski carried his mistress's train at her coronation and passed the wine. He was probably flustered a little at his new importance and embarrassed by the respect shown to him by the new and rising Minister, Bestuzhev. This statesman, it is worth while mentioning, was descended from a Kentish man, named Gabriel Best, who had emigrated to Russia about the year 1400. In her early youth, there had been some talk of marrying Elizabeth to Louis XV of France, with whom, as it seems to us, she had much in common. The match was disdainfully rejected by the Bourbon. But now the princess was autocrat of all the Russians, princes might come vieing for her hand. Already Maurice de Saxe, that gallant and picturesque scion of electoral royalty, was rumoured to be a potential suitor. A master of that kind was not to Bestuzhev's taste. To keep strangers out of the Imperial nest, he, it is believed, proposed to Elizabeth that she should make an honest man of her lover.

The Empress, it is pretty generally agreed, consented—which proves she must have grown genuinely fond of the ex-chorister. D'Allion, the French agent, when ordered in 1747 to enquire into the matter, reported that the marriage had undoubtedly taken place. It was celebrated, by one account, at Perovo, near Moscow, towards the end of 1742; by another, in the suburbs of the city, near a ridiculous house which the favourite had built on the model of a chest of drawers, by a priest named Cyril Florinski, who was by way of reward appointed Archimandrite of Troitskaia Lavra and a member of the Synod.

But no proofs of the marriage, M. Walizewski and other Russian historians are careful to inform us, have ever been found. They add that the mighty Czarina was in a position to close men's mouths. Certainly, some such change in his status is to be inferred from the favourite's altered demeanour. He, the least presuming of men, now behaved himself, not like the Emperor of Russia, but very much like the husband of Elizabeth Romanov. The Imperial carriage, in which were

seated distinguished guests, would be kept waiting for him ; dishes peculiar to his native province had to be served at the Imperial table ; airs and songs of the Ukraine included in the programme of the opera. The Grand Duke of Holstein, Elizabeth's nephew and heir, to satisfy his curiosity, one day burst open a door and found the Empress at breakfast with Razumovski, who was in extreme *déshabillé*. Most convincing proof, to my mind, is that, though the sovereign went on taking lovers, the man from the Ukraine always remained in favour and in her household. *L'Empereur nocturne* he was suggestively styled by someone.

Exaltation did not turn Razumovski's handsome head. He made no secret of his humble origin. Created a Count of the Holy Roman Empire by Charles VII, in 1744, he laughed heartily at the pedigree invented for him by the heralds' college. When his wife made him a Field-Marshal, he said, grinning : " Lizzie, you would never make a lieutenant of me, let alone a Field Marshal."

He was a warm-hearted man, who never forgot old friends and was devoted to his family. One day, to the Empress's astonished indignation, he leapt up from his chair and embraced a new footman. He had recognised an old friend in him. Not that Elizabeth herself was a snob. She sent for the mother of Alexis and greeted her with a phrase from the " Ave Maria " ( " Benedictus fructus ventris tui " ). The bewilderment of the Russian peasant woman on finding herself in such surroundings may be imagined. The story goes that having been rigged out as a court lady, powdered, corsetted and hooped for presentation to Her Majesty, the poor woman on catching sight of her reflection in the mirror, fell on her knees, mistaking it for the Empress. She had been summoned to court expressly, as some believe, to assist at her son's marriage. If so, like the others, she knew how to hold her tongue. But very soon she found court life intolerable, and asked to be sent back to her native village, where she was made happy by being set up in business as keeper of a public-house. Her descendants

held the licence, it is stated, till about twenty-five years ago.

Her children were more amenable to treatment. Alexis showered wealth and offices on his brethren, his particular favourite being his brother Cyril. This young man, who was ultimately appointed Hetman of the Cossacks, acquired a reputation for being a card-player all day and a billiard-player all night. His passion for gambling was not shared by his senior. Alexis, we learn, played only to oblige the company, and did not at all mind being openly robbed. When he took the bank, the others freely helped themselves from his store, his old mistress, Natasia Narishkin, being particularly active in this respect. No doubt she considered she was only collecting her commission upon the fortune he owned to her. A certain prince went so far as to fill his hat with gold pieces from the bank and pass it to his lackey.

If he did not share the national mania for gambling, Alexis did not escape the other great weakness of the Russ. He loved the bottle. He was quarrelsome or rather boisterous, too, in his cups, and women used to offer prayers to the Virgin for the safe return of their husbands when these had gone to any of his convivial parties ; but they never came back without black eyes and bloody noses.

In fact, the court of St. Petersburg, though elegant and cultured when compared with what it had been fifty years before, very much resembled the court of Old King Cole. Elizabeth, able woman though she was, was as extravagant in her self-indulgence as any barbarian. Like her namesake of England, she was inordinately vain and jealous. She spent so much time over her toilet that one wonders how she found a moment to attend to the cares of state. Like most Russians, she hated going to bed, and danced or feasted all night. As she grew fatter, she made a practice of changing her gown three times in the course of a state ball. She allowed no woman in the Empire to pretend to rivalry with her in the matter of dress. One unfortunate, the beautiful Mme



Lupukhin, dared to appear at Court with a rose in her hair. The Empress forced her to her knees, tore out the rose and the strand of hair to which it was attached, buffeted the terrified woman on both cheeks, and sent her fleeing from the room. At her death, Her Majesty was found to have left fifteen thousand costumes and two huge chests filled with silk stockings. In these days, when misfortune has thrown a sympathetic glamour over the Imperial race of Russia, it is worth while to remember that this unbridled luxury and debauchery, which continued for many a long year after Elizabeth's reign, was being supported by the ceaseless toil of wretched serfs.

Elizabeth in her middle age cannot be presented as a sympathetic figure. Her sensuality degenerated into mere animalism. We can reject as doubtful the worst scandals circulated by Mardfield, the agent of her deadly enemy Frederick—we can hardly believe that she would lie, feigning sleep, in a pavilion, yielding to the embrace of any passer-by afterwards to pretend that she had been visited by a faun or a satyr ! But the list of her lovers is a long one and sufficiently supported by data. There was a violinist whom she promoted to be one of her postillions ; a waterman, whose costume displayed his manly charms to advantage ; her own cousin, Mussin-Pushkin ; a coachman. . . . Beketov, I suspect, deliberately laid himself out to captivate her. Taking part in a play given by the Cadet Corps, the handsome youth fell prone, as though overcome, upon the stage. The curtain was dropped. Her Majesty ordered it to be raised and feasted her eyes for some moments on the recumbent form. Presently Beketov was promoted and appointed aide-de-camp to the always complaisant Razumovski. His end was unromantic. He had supplanted the more famous and important Ivan Chuvalov, the brother of Bestuzhev's political rival. Ivan, feigning to take his supersession in good part, hinted that his complexion, which had so charmed their mistress, wanted re-touching, and Beketov was so simple as to use a face cream recommended by him, with the result that a rash spread over

his skin and effectively excluded him from the Imperial harem. But he continued to enjoy the rank and privileges already bestowed on him. Women are not unfrequently spiteful towards their discarded lovers ; but this Empress of Russia, manlike in this as in so many other respects, when she had done with them, wished them well and God-speed.

Whether Razumovski was allowed similar licence, we are not informed. It appears unlikely. At all events, Elizabeth's anger was roused when in 1753, a female serf, Avdotia Nikoneva by name, circulated an extraordinary story that the favourite was secretly married to a Persian princess living in a Russian convent. The person designated turned out to be one, Lukheria Mikhailevna, who had had no more to do with Persia than with Alexis himself. No harm, therefore, came to her, but the imaginative serf was cruelly knouted.

So the years passed. Razumovski drank and hunted, while his wife indulged her appetites, drank cherry-brandy, and gave masque-balls, at which it was her unpleasant fancy that men should appear in the costume of women and women attired as men. She dressed her favourite young men herself, and being proud of her legs, appeared as a French musketeer, a waterman, or a postillion. Meanwhile, she patronised arts and letters, behaved with an easy and selfish good-nature towards her subjects, and made the name of Russia respected far and wide. Her armies overran Prussia, inflicted a crushing defeat on the great Frederick at Kunnersdorf, and marched into Berlin.

But winning battles could not console such a woman for losing her youth. Every morning, with desperate intensity, Elizabeth examined her features in the glass. Flatterers could lie their hardest ; at fifty-two she had become an old woman and she knew it. She shut herself up and disregarded the orders of her physicians. In January, 1762, Alexis Razumovski found himself a widower.

The doubt again arose. Was he married to her ? Years after, Catherine II was urged by certain Ministers to marry

Orlov. The precedent of Elizabeth and Razumovski was adduced. The Empress sent an envoy to question him. He had attained his half-century and was living simply and piously. The envoy found him seated by the fire, reading the Gospels. Was he, in fact, married to the deceased Empress? The question was asked. He need not hesitate to avow it, he was assured, and was shown a deed in Catherine's own hand, promising to confer on him honours and lands. For answer, the man, with a sad, weary air, rose, and went to a cabinet and extracted from it a casket of ebony inlaid with ivory and pearl. Opening this, he displayed before the eager eyes of the envoy a roll of sealed parchments, considered these wistfully, almost lovingly, for a moment, then tore them asunder and threw the pieces on the fire. "Tell Her Majesty," he said, "that I was the Empress Elizabeth's most loving and submissive slave, as I am hers."

Despite the promise held out by the emissary, Alexis felt, doubtless, that this was the safer course to take with a woman like Catherine. There may have been two kings in Brentford, but there was not room in Russia for the husband of the last Romanov Empress. Those parchments with red seals attached did not look like love-letters or leaves from a diary. By destroying them, Razumovski answered the question in the affirmative, while his silence satisfied the dread sovereign that he was a man without ambition or pretensions.

Perhaps he denied the marriage lest dangerous pretenders should father themselves upon him. Elizabeth, strange to say, appears to have left no children by any of her lovers. If she had had any, she would certainly not have shrunk from recognising them. If they had been Razumovski's, we may suppose, from what we know of him, that he would have cherished them and looked after their interests, as he looked after those of his brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces. Yet a doubt about the parentage of the so-called Princess Tarakanov still troubles us. . . .

The career of this mysterious person made such a stir in





Elizabeth, Empress of Russia.





the latter half of the eighteenth century that I make no apology for relating it briefly here. The name, to begin with, M. Walizewski explains, was not Tarakanov, but Daragane. Our ancestors never could get Russian names right. We seldom do nowadays. Not more than eight or nine years after the destruction of those papers by Razumovski, that is to say in 1772, there appeared in Paris an attractive young foreigner calling herself by the hybrid description Princess Aly Emiette de Vlodimir. She passed for a Persian or a Circassian, and was attended by a numerous and elegant suite. The Polish nobles who had found a refuge in Paris flocked round her and people remarked that she had blue eyes and *cendré* hair like the late Empress Elizabeth. All of a sudden, the two leading members of her suite were arrested for debt and discovered to be impostors. Fearing a similar exposure, the lovely stranger vanished.

Frankfurt-on-the-Main was the scene of her re-appearance. Here she enamoured an indigent Duke of Limburg (probably Limburg in Nassau, not the Dutch province), who invited her to stay at his tumbledown castle of Oberstein. Presently he made love to her ; but on discovering that he was not offering marriage, she disclosed her identity. She was the Princess of Azov, a feudatory state of Russia. On hearing that her rank was as good as his own the Duke promptly offered marriage, to find himself jilted a few weeks later for Prince Radziwil, a Polish noble who had been expelled by Catherine II, and was now visiting the pleasant valleys of the Rhineland.

The Duke of Limburg would, no doubt, have avenged this affront, had not the Pole whispered in his ear, " This lady is no match for a poor German princeling ; she is no other than Elizabeth II, Empress of all the Russias, daughter of Elizabeth I and her husband, Count Alexis Razumovski ! " To this exalted person's hand, his serene highness agreed, he could not aspire ; but he threw himself heart and soul, into her cause, and placed his very limited fortune at her disposal.

At that time, as often before and since, Russia and Turkey

were at war. It was thought that the Grand Seignior would gladly support a pretender to his enemy's throne, the granddaughter of Peter the Great. Accordingly a move was made towards Constantinople. But for some reason unknown to us, a halt was made at Ragusa, on the Dalmatian coast, then a tiny independent republic. Here "Princess Daragane"—this seems to have been her official incognito—was lodged in the house of the French Consul, and here she addressed letters to Orlov, the Admiral commanding the Russian fleet in the Mediterranean, apprising him of her existence and of her accession to the throne of Russia. She forwarded what purported to be the will of her august mother, Elizabeth I.

While she was waiting for a reply, peace was concluded between Russia and Turkey. There being nothing now to hope for from the side of the Porte, the "princess" decided to get nearer the Russian fleet which lay off Leghorn. At Ragusa she had acquired a lover and a devoted knight in the person of a young Pole named Domanski. At Naples the famous Sir William Hamilton became an admirer. Unwittingly, he was also the cause of her undoing. As her funds were nearly exhausted, he gave her a letter of introduction to his colleague, John Dick, British Consul at Leghorn, who was also by way of being a banker. The luckless adventuress having sent this on, went on to Rome to await the answer and to impress the cardinals and notables of the Eternal City.

By this time the terrible Catherine had become aware of this pretender to her throne. At once she sent orders to Orlov to secure her person, even if he had to force the Republic of Ragusa by a bombardment to give her up. Trifles of that sort never stood in Catherine's way. But Rome was out of reach of her guns and Orlov had to resort to cunning to accomplish his mistress's purpose.

Most historians and common report at the time indicate the British Consul as the Russian Admiral's confederate and

tool. It is alleged that he showed the girl's letter to Orlov, who wrote assuring her of his allegiance if she would present herself to the fleet at Leghorn. Poor lovesick Domanski, loving the woman and not the Empress *in posse*, scented treachery. He implored her not to go. But the poor girl was dazzled by this unexpected promise of support and by an offer of money from Dick. She went to Leghorn and was handsomely entertained. Orlov, it was afterwards asserted by his accomplice, during these few days ashore, made her his mistress while perfecting his plans for her destruction. At last, again in the teeth of her Pole's warning, "the princess" stepped on board the flagship. Instead of being received with royal honours she was instantly arrested and confined, though with some ceremony, in the captain's cabin. Domanski and her other followers drew their swords but were disarmed. Orlov pulled back for the shore, at the last moment, let us hope, ashamed to face the girl he was sending to her doom; the flagship weighed anchor and made sail for the Atlantic and the north.

Catherine must have been amused by the simplicity of the pretender. The captive upon her arrival at St. Petersburg in May, 1775, was confined in the fortress of St. Peter and Paul and examined by Marshal Gallitzine. She was about twenty-three years of age, and, added the doctors whom she had sent for, in the last stages of consumption. The account she gave of herself was a strange one. Born at Kiel, in Holstein, she never knew her parents, but was told that they lived in Moscow. In childhood she was conveyed across Russia to Ispahan and there continued for some years under the paternal protection of a Persian prince from whom she learnt that she was the daughter of the Russian Empress. On reaching womanhood she was taken back to Europe by her guardian, who then vanished, leaving her, however, with plenty of money. It was at this stage that she appeared in Paris. That was all she professed to know about herself. As to the documents, including the alleged will sent to Orlov, she hardly



appreciated their nature ; they had been handed to her by the Persian, with instructions to transmit them to the Commander of the Russian fleet.

She was bullied, pestered, cross-examined and threatened, but nothing more could be got out of her. It does not appear that she was knouted, or tortured, and it was hardly worth while killing her, in face of the medical report. Domanski also was questioned. All he could reply was : " You may keep me in prison for ever if you will only let me marry her ! " Instead he was probably sent to Siberia, but his poor young mistress died on December 4th, escaping, no doubt, a worse fate. Bothered in her last moments by the priest " to confess," she could only gasp, " Say the prayers for the dying—there is no time for anything more."

Who, after all, was she ? Sir Nathaniel Wraxall attaches significance to the fact that Catherine made haste to discharge the debts which the " Empress Elizabeth II " had contracted in the south of Europe. Many people believed in her. I hazard a theory which I have not seen put forward elsewhere. One recalls that crazy story of Razumovski's having married a Persian princess. Might not this adventuress have been Razumovski's daughter by some Persian woman ? a daughter whose existence might have been unsuspected by her father, or on account of whose mother he might have been led to deny his marriage with Elizabeth ?

As regards the villains of the piece, it should in fairness be said that Sir John Dick, questioned by Wraxall at a dinner party in Berkeley Square in February, 1799, denied any active complicity in the plot. The girl, he asserted, had simply been brought to his house at Leghorn by Orlov as a visitor, and he had had nothing to do with her being kidnapped and taken out to the Russian vessel. He thought he had seen her before and had since learned positively that she was the daughter of a Nuremberg baker. Sir John Dick's assurances did not carry conviction to Sir Nathaniel's mind ; but it would be unpleasant to think that a British representative

had any share in so dirty a business which gave deep offence to the neutral state where it was carried out.\*

---

\* Technically, I suppose, the deck of the Russian ship, even in neutral waters, was Russian territory. Some years ago it was rumoured that a man serving on another Russian warship visiting Portsmouth was executed on board, but the ship had first been taken outside the three-mile limit. One recalls the kidnapping of Sun Yat Sen inside the Chinese Legation in Portland Place,

## IX

## THEIR ROYAL HIGHNESSES OF GLOUCESTER AND CUMBERLAND

IN the year 1730, there was a shop in Pall Mall where "clothes for children"—baby linen, as we should say—were made and sold. The upper part of the house was let out, as it would be now, as chambers for single gentlemen. Among these gentlemen was no less notable a person than Sir Edward Walpole, the second son of the reigning Prime Minister, a lodger of whom any draper might be proud. Now Sir Edward, though undoubtedly a fine gentleman, was always rather quiet and studious in habit, not so unlike his brother Horace; but he could not fail to notice a delightfully pretty girl whom he met coming in and out of the shop or upon the stairs. "And who are you, my pretty creature?" we can imagine him asking. The girl would have dropped a very low curtsy (and perhaps the basket on her arm) and explained herself as Dorothy Clement, "an' it please your honour," a milliner and apprentice to good Mrs. Rennie, the shopkeeper. Her accent betrayed her north country origin. She was, indeed, from Durham, and no doubt hastened to let the fine gentleman know that she had quite decent connections—a butler in a Duke's family, an under-footman to my lord so-and-so. More—she had a sister in business on her own account at Bath.

After this, encounters between Sir Edward and Dorothy Clement upon the stairs grew very frequent. Possibly the other apprentices remarked on their workmate's long absences, caught sounds, we may be sure, of light scuffling behind the

door and quizzed Dolly on her heightened colour and disordered kerchief as she came in. These things reached the ears of her employers, severe people, concerned for the good repute of their household. Possibly they may have given a hint to their aristocratic lodger, or conscience may have pricked him ; for we find him removing from the draper's and setting in up a house of his own farther down Pall Mall. For Dolly, upon his departure, life became unbearable—no more kissing behind the door, no pretty compliments to look forward to, only the raillery of her comrades, the drudgery of the work-room, and the suspicious sour looks of the draper. So one day, she rushed down the street, burst in upon Sir Edward as he was sitting down to dinner, and implored him to protect her from the unkind treatment of her employers. The Prime Minister's son looked at her and does not appear to have been long in making up his mind. Calling his servant, he told him to place a chair for Miss Clement opposite his at the table, then and every night thereafter. From that hour until her last, Dorothy Clement never felt the need of a friend or a husband.

Her happiness did not last very long. She bore her lover four children in quick succession and died in giving birth to the last, as some say, in 1738. Walpole would have married her, but for fear of his father—he had no thought of repudiating their children, of whom he was passionately fond. There was one boy, Edward, who went in the army, and died, a colonel, in 1771 ; there were three girls, Laura, Maria and Charlotte, who waxed every year more beautiful. They were the pets not only of their father, but of Uncle Horace, who loved to show them his pretty things at Strawberry Hill. Maria, the second and loveliest, the diarist tells us, “ was from her birth impetuous and from her childhood ambitious. While a girl, she had often said she would be a lady. Her father, to correct her, asked her, how that could be, for she was a beggar. ‘ Then,’ said she, ‘ I will be a lady beggar.’ ”

One can only suppose Sir Edward to have used these words



when his daughter was too young to grasp the implication. For beggars, he took care, they should not become. He gave them all the advantages that wealth and education could procure. They went everywhere except to court. Laura married the Rev. and Hon. Frederick Keppel, brother of the Earl of Albemarle, who became Bishop of Exeter and Dean of Windsor; Charlotte married, rather reluctantly, Lord Huntingtower, the Earl of Dysart's heir, who wanted her distractedly. It was Uncle Horace who made Maria's marriage. He found a husband for her in Lord Waldegrave, a very worthy and distinguished noble, twenty years older than she. "I jumbled them together," writes Horace on April 11th, 1759, "and he has already proposed. For character and credit, he is the first match in England—for beauty, I think she is. She has not a fault in her face or person, and the detail is charming—a warm complexion, tending to brown, fine eyes, brown hair, fine teeth, and infinite wit and vivacity."

As Lady Waldegrave, the milliner's daughter was well received at court. The irregularity of her origin was corrected, one might say, by the perfect regularity of her behaviour. She was a strict church-goer, dignified, and a devoted wife. Four years after marriage she found herself a widow at the age of twenty-six. Like her mother, she had had three daughters, who all inherited the family's good looks. Each of these girls had a portion of £8,000 and married into the peerage; Maria herself was not left, in her own opinion, very well off. Horace took a house for her called Ragman's Castle, not far from Strawberry Hill, so that he could see her and her baby girls frequently. A lady calling herself "Very Old Subscriber," writing to the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1807, tells how much she was impressed in her early youth by the loveliness and charm of the Walpole and Waldegrave girls.

Maria's beauty was in no way impaired by maternity and widowhood. She was still in her weeds when it was noticed that she was everywhere followed about by the young Duke

of Portland. "He was only twenty-four, possessed of immense wealth, derived both from his father and mother, of good, if not brilliant parts, and of unblemished character." His support was canvassed for by both factions in politics; he afterwards became Prime Minister, and he was regarded as the finest match in all England. Yet, to everybody's boundless astonishment, it became known that he had been refused by the widow Waldegrave.

When he discovered who his rival was, his grace must have shrugged his shoulders a little disdainfully. George III had a younger and favourite brother, William Henry, Duke of Gloucester and Edinburgh, at this time only nineteen years of age. He was recognised in the nursery as the fool of a by no means bright family. His Saxon mother\* used to taunt him so cruelly that one day he said, "I was thinking how I should feel if I made my son as unhappy as you make me." It is good to know that as he grew to man's estate he found people to love him, notably his brother, the King, and the beautiful Lady Waldegrave.

"What's more extraordinary," writes Lady Bunbury, commenting on the attachment between the Prince and the young widow, "she does appear to be in love with him, and he is not of consequence or rich enough to make it worth her while to feign it, I should think." When the Prince gave her a bracelet worth at least five hundred pounds, the same writer spitefully added, "That's not for nothing, surely." Women who were jealous of Lady Waldegrave's looks and irritated by her hitherto discreet behaviour were surprised and then delighted by what they believed to be her fall from virtue. "Her mother," one titled gossip reported, "was seen on the top of a cinder cart by the keeper of an infamous house and beckoned in, on account of her beauty." No doubt such a person would be proud to be a Prince's mistress.

---

\* Augusta. She was a princess of Saxe-Gotha, the breed which produced Queen Victoria's cultured consort.

In fact, when Maria slighted the Duke of Portland, she applied to her uncle for advice. He wrote for her a letter to Gloucester, "in which she renounced his acquaintance on the no new terms of not being of rank to be his wife, and too considerable to be his mistress. But," adds Horace, "a short fortnight baffled all my prudence. The Prince renewed his visits with more assiduity after that little interval, and Lady Waldegrave received him without disguise. My part was soon taken. I had done my duty. A second attempt had been hopeless folly."

Gradually Maria let it be seen that she was living on marital terms with the Duke. Lady Mary Coke, her bitterest detractor, talks about the presents he had showered on her, and a house he had taken for her in Portman Square, the rent of which must be between five and six hundred a year. His Royal Highness's gentlemen and equerries attended her in public, and handed her into her chair. Through him she received gifts from his sister, the ill-fated Queen of Denmark. Close to his own lodge, Cranbourn, he built her what Horace terms a palace at St. Leonard's, in Windsor Forest. In February, 1770, they appeared together at a masque at Mrs. Cornelly's rooms in Soho Square, he dressed as Edward IV, she as Queen Elizabeth Wydeville. Everybody, thought the diarist, must have known what that meant.

But everybody did not. A plainer hint was given when my lady, who had lodgings at Hampton Court Palace, asked permission of my lord Chamberlain to drive her carriage up to her door in the inner court—a privilege reserved for royalty. After much beating about the bush and bullying by the royal Duke, the court functionary refused the permission. Thereupon, Lady Waldegrave gave up her apartments. The King and Queen do not seem to have put any direct questions to William Henry about his relations with her ladyship; they preferred to assume that she was his mistress. The Duke gave a ball, which their Majesties attended on the understanding that nobody other than their servants and Court officials



was to be invited ; but Lady Waldegrave was there, with the result that people supposed she must be the Duke's wife. The Queen, it was assumed, would never have met his mistress. Her Majesty "on that occasion, wished that her virtue had been thought more accommodating."

This ambiguous status must have been peculiarly painful to a woman of pride and strait-laced opinions. Possibly Maria expected it to be put an end to by the birth of a child. What, in fact, brought about the disclosure of her secret was the clandestine marriage of another prince of the royal house of England.

This Prince was Henry Frederick, Duke of Cumberland, fourth son of Frederick Prince of Wales, and therefore next brother to Gloucester. He was the black sheep of the fold, had no more brains than his brothers, and not even the veneer of respectability. Eloping with Lady Grosvenor, he was detected by the husband's servants, whom, it is alleged, he implored not to hurt him. Lord Grosvenor filed a bill of divorcement and his Royal Highness was cited as the co-respondent. His ill-spelt and miserably composed love-letters excited great amusement. This intrigue cost the Duke ten thousand pounds, part of which the King had to pay. Nor did the high-born lover take the course which is usually supposed to redeem the honour of the parties in these cases. He left Lady Grosvenor to shift for herself, and plunged into a dingy amour with a citizen's wife, whose husband was rather proud of such a mark of royal favour. Presently it appeared that people of higher degree regarded this wretched princeling as a bird worth trapping. There was a certain Lord Irnham, Luttrell by name, "Who might be pronounced the greatest reprobate in England. He once challenged his eldest son, afterwards Lord Carhampton, who in return sent word that if he (the father) could prevail on any gentleman to be his second, he would fight him with all his heart. Such," continues Lady Stuart, "was the style of the family. The daughters had habits suited to it, noisy, vulgar, indelicate



and intrepid : utter strangers to good company, they were never to be seen in any woman of fashion's house, though often leaders of riotous parties at Vauxhall or Ranelagh."

One of these lively young ladies was now Mrs. Anne Horton, a pretty coquettish widow, "With the most amorous eyes in the world and eyelashes a yard long, coquette beyond measure, artful as Cleopatra, and completely mistress of all her passions and projects. Indeed, eyelashes three-quarters of a yard shorter would have served to conquer such a head as she has turned." Thus Horace ; elsewhere he describes her : "There was something so bewitching in her languishing eyes, which she could animate to enchantment if she pleased, and her coquetry was so active, so varied, and yet so habitual, that it was difficult not to see through it, and yet as difficult to resist it. She danced divinely, and had a great deal of wit of the satiric kind. . . ."

One cannot help liking these pretty daredevil Luttrells. Anne, in spite of her more ordinary origin, would have made a better heroine for a novel than the prim Maria. The head she turned was Cumberland's. He was called to account, it is said, by an angry and athletic brother.

Drawn on by "the most amorous eyes in the world," and gently pricked in the rear by a sharp sword, his Royal Highness offered marriage to Mrs. Horton. They were married at her house in Hertford Street, Mayfair, on October 2nd, 1771, quite regularly, with no special precautions of privacy. Their honeymoon was spent in France, and the Duke, feeling brave with the water between him and his brother, wrote to George from Calais announcing that marriage, quite as a matter of course.

The consequences of that letter were far-reaching, and endure at the present day.

The King was enormously indignant. Mrs. Horton, though what a later generation would have called fast, had not exactly forfeited her reputation. She was an infinitely better match than the miserable Cumberland had any right to expect.

But the stupid, narrow-minded King of England considered it an affront to the royal blood that a prince should marry a commoner. He expressed his disapproval in the most public manner. Ambassadors were asked not to visit at Cumberland House ; the Lord Chamberlain announced that no one calling there would be received at court. But however His Majesty might rage, the marriage was legal and any children born to the pair would be in the line of succession to the Crown of Great Britain. That nothing of this sort should ever happen again, George took counsel with his Ministers, and a draft was prepared of the afterwards notorious Royal Marriage Act.

“ This will force Lady Waldegrave to declare her marriage,” said somebody. To which Lady Coke retorted that she did not believe Lady Waldegrave had any marriage to declare. But on May 19th, 1772, Sir Edward Walpole had a letter from his daughter, apprising him that she had been married to the Duke of Gloucester as far back as September 6th, 1766, at her house in Pall Mall, by her own chaplain, Dr. Morton, without witnesses. The Duchess said she had no desire to be called Royal Highness, but was concerned only for her character. “ Very few people will believe that a woman will refuse to be called princess if it is in her power. To have the power is my pride.” Horace Walpole on reading this letter says he was ready to kiss his niece’s feet.

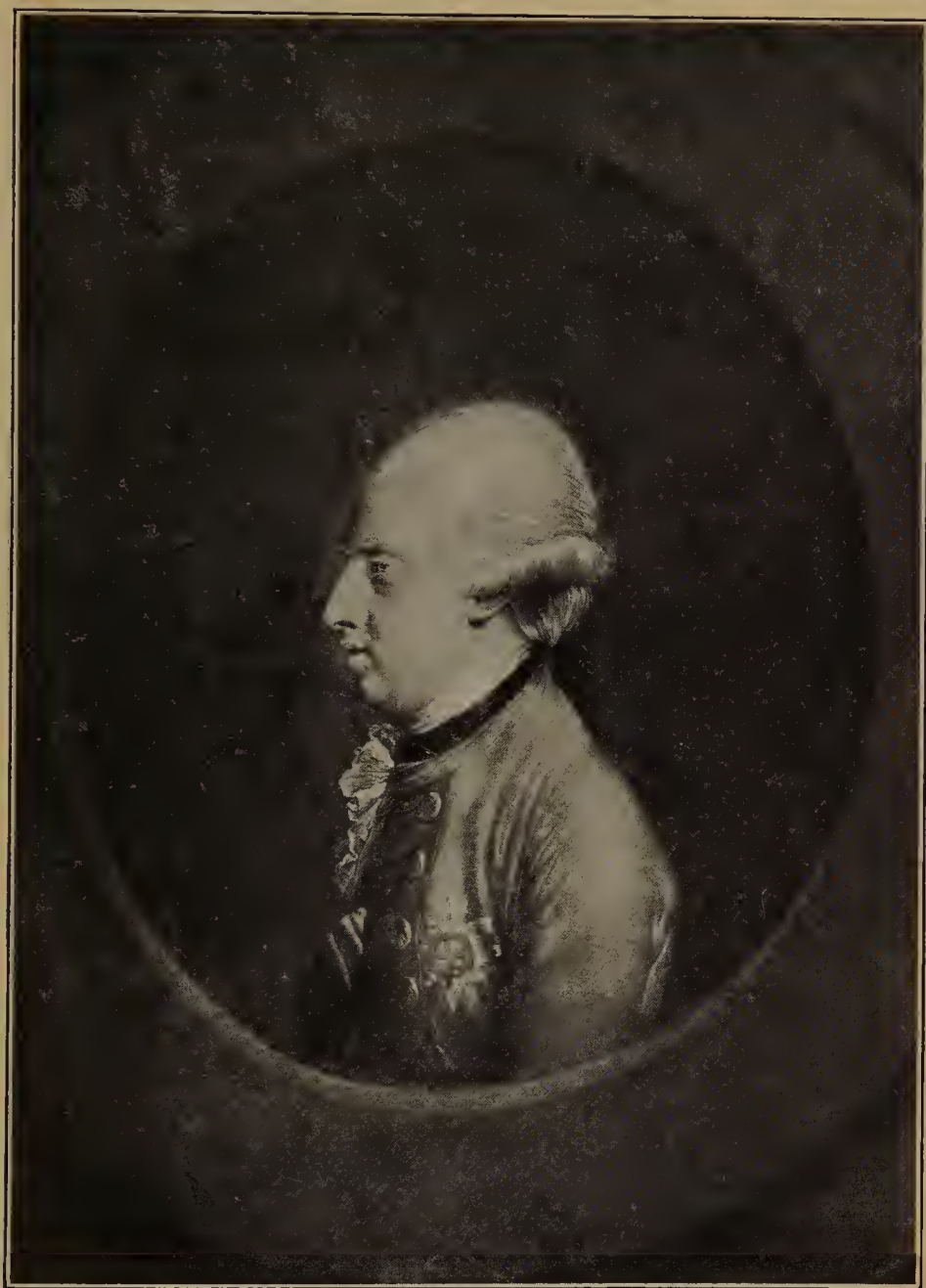
The Duke of Gloucester had disclosed the fact of his marriage in a letter which he handed to his brother. No doubt suspecting the contents, George asked if he need read it then. The Duke said “ yes.” The King on reading it, abused his favourite brother violently. As the passing of the new Act into law was imminent, however, he consented to have the marriage enquired into and, if the facts were as alleged, established by a commission of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Chancellor and the Bishop of London.

Both the Duke and the Duchess testified to their marriage, and evidence was given that His Highness had avowed it when he believed himself to be at the point of death in Tuscany

some years before. The Bishop of Exeter, Maria's brother-in-law, deposed that when he spoke of the proposed Act to her, "She burst into a flood of tears, and cried, 'I am—I am married!' and then falling into a greater agony, she wrung her hands and exclaimed, 'Good God! What have I done? I have betrayed the Duke and broken my promise to him of never owning my marriage without his leave.'"

After a short deliberation the tribunal reported to the King that his brother's marriage with Lord Waldegrave's widow was undoubtedly valid and legal. Gloucester wrote offering to repeat the ceremony if the King thought proper; but George saw no necessity for the step. His Majesty washed his hands of his two brothers and their wives. They were all four ostracised. He vowed he would do nothing for them or their children. Referring to Maria, George said he could never think of placing her in a situation to satisfy her pride and vanity.

Horace Walpole who, at once, began to address his niece as "Your Royal Highness," and to kiss her hand, was naturally wroth at the slight put upon his family. He raked up the story of the King's ancestress, *Eléonore d'Olbreuse*, and argued that the descendants of an English peer were to be preferred to the petty princelings of Germany. The Duke himself recalled the circumstances of James II's marriage with Ann Hyde, when Duke of York, and wished that George III had behaved like Charles II on that occasion. (James had seduced Ann, and Charles insisted upon his marrying her, though her father, Clarendon, wanted to have her sent to the Tower, and a number of "gentlemen," anxious to help the Prince out of a difficulty, were ready to accept paternity of the coming child.) If it was Maria's illegitimacy that stuck in the King's gorge, he might have been reminded that all the Kings of England claimed descent from William the Bastard, the greatest and noblest of them all and through Henry VII from the mistress of John of Gaunt. On other grounds, the marriages were disapproved of by the public.



William Henry, Duke of Gloucester.





John Wilkes, among others, thought that the intermarriage of royalty with the nobility might lead to another War of the Roses.

William Henry was fond of his eldest brother and not wishing, like the Cumberlands, to affront him publicly, went with his wife abroad. A desire to wean his wife from her daughter's society may have partly dictated the move. He said he could never live with another man's children. The pair were treated with royal honours in France. In the streets of Genoa, by the way, as Wraxall narrates, the Duke was passed by Charles Edward, "the Pretender," returning from Paris. At Rome, in the Palazzo Theodoli, on June 15th, 1776, Maria gave birth to a son, baptized William Frederick. The next year we find them at Venice. On the Venetian mainland, the Duke fell seriously ill. But on October 24th the same year they were back in town, established at Gloucester House in Grosvenor Street.

Though their husbands had at first made common cause, the Duchesses of Gloucester and Cumberland were very soon estranged, as both of them continued to be from the court. The royal ban, however, had become a dead letter. "Neither of the proscribed houses"—we quote Lady Stuart—"was at all deserted, but they differed from each other materially in point of society, for the Duchess of Gloucester maintained a degree of state, approved of by the Duke, that gave some stiffness to her parties which were commonly rather select. Unbounded freedom reigned at Cumberland House, as its mistress, laughing forms and etiquettes to scorn, was better pleased that rag, tag and bobtail should flock in than that numbers should ever be wanting. . . . She had sense enough to know that nothing could ever place her on a level with persons born in the purple, therefore she bore them an inveterate hatred, and made whatever appertained to birth, rank and dignity the object of her contemptuous sarcasms. Her sister, Miss Betty Luttrell, who had a great deal of real though coarse wit, and was more precisely what the Regent Orleans

called a *roué* than one would have thought it practicable for anyone in petticoats to have been, governed the family with a high hand, marshalling the gaming tables, gathered round her the men, and led the way in ridiculing the King and Queen. Buckingham House served as a byword—a signal for the onset of Ho-ho-ho!—and a mighty scope for satire was afforded by the Queen's wide mouth and occasional imperfect English, as well as the King's trick of saying "What-what?" and his ill-made coats and general antipathy to the fashion. But the marks principally aimed at were his virtues. . . . Nothing of this scoffing passed at Gloucester House. The Duke respected himself and his brother too much to permit it, and the Duchess, however sore on her own account, saw nothing ridiculous in conjugal fidelity, nor yet in going to church and saying one's prayers—superstitious practices to which the unenlightened woman was greatly addicted herself."

As a result of his decorous behaviour, William Henry became reconciled with the King, and settlements were made on his son and daughter. But it does not appear that George or Charlotte ever relaxed so far as to welcome the Duchess at court.

Late in life she was subjected to some mortification by her husband's passion for one of her ladies-in-waiting, Lady Almeria Carpenter, daughter of the Earl of Tyrconnel. Selwyn describes Lady Almeria as "the beauty of the former night," and as "one of the most beautiful women of her time, but to whom nature had been sparing of intellectual attraction." That drawback probably rendered her more acceptable to the Hanoverian Prince, whose family has never been remarkable for intellect or fond of intellectual society. So Lady Almeria "reigned at Gloucester House. The Duchess remained, indeed, its nominal mistress, but Lady Almeria constituted its ornament and its pride."

Maria found consolation in religion. Hannah Moore paid her a visit and they had "Two hours of solid, rational, religious conversation." The formidable Hannah left, much impressed

by her hostess's condescension and by her toleration of "the strange things" she had said "of a religious kind." The daughter of the runaway sempstress had become very much the *grande dame* and princess. When she died in 1807, two or three years after her husband, she was borne to her tomb with royal honours.

Sophia, her daughter by the Duke, was a genial princess, who was never weighed down by her responsibilities as Ranger of Greenwich Park. Her son, who succeeded his father as Duke of Gloucester, was affectionately known to his friends and the public as Silly Billy. It is not, perhaps, to be regretted that the royal stock of England received no further increase through him or through his uncle, Cumberland.



## X

## THE WIFE OF GEORGE IV

THE Duke of Cumberland and Mrs. Horton were married in October, 1771. In his speech from the throne on opening the first Parliament of 1772, George III announced that an Act would be introduced for the better regulating of the future marriages of the royal family. The Bill was drafted among others by the Lord Chancellor and the Attorney-General, and was, of course, backed by the Prime Minister, Lord North, and his Government.

Since the Bill became the law of the land and since it may at any time clash with the desires of some prince among us, it may be worth while to recite it in full. Stripped of the preamble, it stands on the Statute Book in the following terms :

“ . . . Be it enacted that no descendant of the body of his late Majesty King George II, male or female, other than the issue of princesses who have married or may hereafter marry into foreign families, shall be capable of contracting matrimony without the previous consent of His Majesty, his heirs, etc., signified under the great seal, and declared in council (which consent, to preserve the memory thereof, is hereby directed to be set out in the licence and register of marriage, and to be entered in the books of the Privy Council) ; and that every marriage or matrimonial contract of any such descendant without such consent first obtained, shall be void.

“ In case such descendant of George II, being above the age

of twenty-five years, shall persist in the resolution to contract a marriage disapproved of by the King, his heirs, etc., then such descendant upon giving notice to the King's Privy Council, which notice is hereby directed to be entered upon the books thereof, may at any time from the expiration of twelve calendar months after such notice given as aforesaid, contract such marriage ; and such marriage with the person before proposed and rejected, may be duly solemnised, without the previous consent of His Majesty or successors ; and shall be good unless both Houses of Parliament shall, before the expiration of the said twelve months, expressly declare their disapprobation thereof.

“ Every person who shall wilfully presume to solemnise or to assist or to be present at the celebration of any marriage with any such descendant, or at his or her making any matrimonial contract, without such consent as aforesaid first obtained, except in the case above mentioned, shall, being duly convicted thereof, suffer the penalties ordained by the statute of provision and premunire made 16 Richard II.”

It is strange that this measure should have provoked such a storm. Calmly considered, it gives the English sovereign no more power than is and always has been exercised by the chiefs of almost all royal houses. Indeed, it merely extends over all the descendants of a common stock, the authority actually enjoyed over his children by every father in Latin countries. But both in the Lords and Commons it was stubbornly contested in all its stages. The House of Commons was full and sat late every night of the debate. Not that anybody was heard to approve either of the marriages which were the immediate occasion of the Bill ; but Englishmen in those days were justly suspicious of the least extension of the royal prerogative. Though, too, it might have been argued that the Hanoverian princes tended to be stupid and feeble-minded and needed to be protected against themselves, it was also well understood that the King intended that his family should intermarry only with members of German princely

houses. Lord Folkestone in the Upper House had this in mind, when he mentioned Queen Elizabeth and Queen Anne as the offspring of two such marriages as the Act was intended to condemn. (Neither, of course, was contrary to the *letter* of the measure under discussion.) The Bill, his lordship stigmatised as "un-English, arbitrary, opposed to natural law and contrary to the law of God." "New-fangled, wanton and tyrannical," Lord Chatham described it. Another peer, obliquely alluding to Queen Charlotte's amazing fertility, objected that before many years the royal stock would have multiplied to such an extent that the Bill would apply to a considerable section of the whole population.

Fox, in the Commons, was not less emphatic. He gave the Bill, as he had threatened, the most determined opposition in every part and at every stage. "A midnight, dark, and hellish business," shrieked Colonel Barré. One of the most telling and logical speeches was made by a Mr. Dowdeswell. His main argument was neatly expressed in a verse which ran through most of the newspapers at this time :

" Quoth Dick to Tom, ' This act appears  
Absurd as I'm alive,  
To take the crown at eighteen years,  
The wife at twenty-five.  
The myst'ry how shall we explain ?  
For sure as Dowdeswell said,  
Thus early if they're fit to reign,  
They must be fit to wed.'

Quoth Tom to Dick, ' Thou art a fool  
And little know'st of life.  
Alas ! 'tis easier far to rule  
A kingdom than a wife.' "

The most serious and honest opposition came from those who held that marriage was a natural and religious covenant, not to be hedged about with artificial restrictions. In the course of these histories we have often had occasion to contrast the religious and legalistic conceptions of matrimony, and it will have been observed, neither ever appears to be held

consistently. For the "diriment impediments" of the canonist are more frivolous and vexatious than the conditions imposed by the civil codes. Even among savages, in many respects more reasonable than we are, there exist all sorts of fanciful restrictions upon marriage. While George III's Bill was passing, in the teeth of opposition, through Parliament, a correspondent wrote to the *Gentleman's Magazine* postulating such a case as was actually to occur, where a prince twenty-one years of age was properly married by banns by a clergyman of the Church of England, and demanded, "What court would bastardise the issue? Would not the whole country rise as one man, in defence of the law of God and the law of the land, in opposition to a measure that militates [*sic*] both?"

That correspondent did not know his countrymen. The people who had not risen as one man when the young King Edward V was publicly bastardised at Paul's Cross, or when Henry VIII put away his wife, were not going to break their heads now in the purely domestic quarrels of their princes. When, however, the King went by, to give his assent to the measure, one of the bystanders said within his hearing, "If the Bill is a good one God bless the King; if it is wrong, the King is but a man." The Royal Marriage Act became law on April 1st, which some may think an inauspicious date, 1772.

In defence of this once hotly-debated measure, it has been pointed out \* that no appeal has ever been made under its provisions from the sovereign's decision to Parliament. It does not, as was once ignorantly supposed, bar intermarriage between royal and non-royal persons, as has been sufficiently attested of very recent years. But the instinct which animated the opposition was, in the main, a true one. The penalty for an infraction of this, as of practically all other laws in restraint of marriage, falls not on the offender but on innocent parties, the woman or children. It need not be so, had law-makers the wit or the goodwill to see it. Immorality could

---

\* By Mrs. W. H. Wilkins, in his exhaustive and authoritative work, "Mrs. Fitzherbert" (1905), to which I am deeply indebted.



be far more effectively restrained by illegitimizing the parent than the child. It would be quite as easy to enact that upon the irregularity of a union being discovered, the property of the parties should automatically become vested in the issue of such union. I throw out this suggestion, which I fancy is original, by way of retort to those who pretend that the marriage laws are framed with a view to the vindication of morality. This particular Act was soon to prove a new instrument in men's hands for women's undoing. As will presently be shown, moreover, it was badly and inconsistently drawn, as Acts of our Legislature are in nine cases out of ten.

The future of his own children was certainly in his mind, as well as the misdeeds of his brothers, when George III imposed his will on Parliament. His eldest son had not at that time attained his tenth birthday. There was soon to develop that animosity between father and son which Sophia Dorothea might have left as a curse on her descendants. The other curse—dullness—the fourth George at least did not inherit. Despite his cloistered and unintelligent upbringing, he startled the long-suffering English people by his brightness and good looks. As he grew to man's estate, the world was astonished to perceive in him a scion of George I, who was quite an Englishman, who had real pretensions to elegance, and the outward appearance of a gentleman. For these latter good points he must have been indebted to his long-dead ancestors, the d'Olbreuses of Poitou, or less probably to his Saxon grandmother. Mr. Wilkins, who had to explain and justify his heroine's attachment for the man, asks us not to accept Thackeray's portrait of him, to believe that in youth, at least, "The Prince of Wales was charming; no Stuart prince was ever more graceful than he, more generous and one would fain hope more chivalrous. He was tall and finely formed; he had a handsome and manly countenance; his leg—legs were much esteemed in the eighteenth century \*—

---

\* Hardly more than now (1926); but this was written 22 years ago.

was the envy of all the beaux ; his smile the desire of all the belles ; and his bow the most princely bow of any prince in Europe. His beauty was heightened by the picturesque dress of the period. He dressed with great richness and variety, as well he might, for it is said that his clothes for one year amounted to no less than ten thousand pounds [in value]. One of his early admirers [Mary Robinson] who had every opportunity of judging, dwells on the graces of his person, the irresistible sweetness of his smile, the tenderness of his melodious yet manly voice, the fascinating and polished ingeniousness of his manners."

In comparison with the loutish princes to whom England had so long been accustomed, no doubt George did appear like that. As to his early successes with women, which so much disgusted and annoyed his parents, these do not necessarily imply any exceptional grace in an heir to the British throne. It says more for his fastidiousness, at any rate, that the women were themselves very beautiful. He did not succumb to ugliness, like so many of his forbears—though perhaps, after all, beneath their skin the Walmodens were as fair as the Perditas and Jerseys.

To my eyes Maria Fitzherbert does not seem as beautiful as either of the last-named ladies. As a girl she is said to have been known as the beautiful "Miss Smythe," but maturity brought with it a trifle too much of rotundity and accentuated her aquiline features. She was six years older than her prince, having been born on July 26th, 1756. Her father, Walter Smythe, was a cadet of an old Catholic family, and had served in the Austrian army. Maria was educated in an English convent at Paris, returning to her parents' home at Brambridge, near Winchester. Her girlhood must have been quiet and dull enough. Roman Catholics in England lived then in the shadow of the penal laws. As yet no measure of relief had been passed. They dwelt, a race apart in their own country, regarded with dislike and suspicion by a superstitious populace, which Lord George Gordon was to goad into fury.

It was a crime to celebrate Mass. Priests were pursued and condemned for ministering to their flocks. Two poor Catholic labourers about the middle of the century were prosecuted for not attending the Protestant Parish church. At the other end of the social scale, the Earl of Arundel was stopped while driving and his horses taken from him by a Protestant at five pounds apiece, that being the price at which, under statute, any Protestant could buy any Catholic's horse. Bigotry, it will be seen, was no respecter of persons ; and though Catholic nobles did move in society and could not exactly be treated as pariahs, even the gentry who clung to the old faith were doomed to retirement and isolation.

Some of them were wealthy landowners notwithstanding. Such was Edward Weld, of Lulworth Castle, Dorset, head of one of the best-known Catholic families in the kingdom. To him, Maria Smythe was married at the age of eighteen. Within less than a year she was left a widow. Her husband had made a will, bequeathing practically his whole estate to her, but as he had forgotten or decided not to sign it, she had to be content with a not illiberal provision made by his brother and heir.

As the "Widow Weld," she was presently seen in London drawing-rooms and there she may have met her second husband, Thomas Fitzherbert. They were married in 1778. Fitzherbert was younger than her former husband, as wealthy and well born, but much less of a recluse. The pair entertained liberally at their Derbyshire seat, and came to town every year. The rigour of the penal laws had been slightly mitigated, and thus encouraged, Fitzherbert, like other Catholic gentlemen at the time, paraded his attachment to the established dynasty. His house in Park Lane became a rallying point for his co-religionists. While helping them during the ridiculous and disgraceful Gordon riots, he caught a chill, which resulted in his death at Nice, in 1781, at the age of thirty-seven.

Maria did not return to England till the following year,



when she settled down at Marble Hill, Twickenham. The estate is now a public park, and must be well known to Londoners. The nymphs and dryads which poetasters of an earlier age imagined to haunt the banks of the Thames must have been scared away long since by the whirring and whizzing of the electric car and the chug-chug of the motor-launch; but the prospect of Richmond Hill from this side of the river is still pleasing and explains Charles Lamb's preference of the lawns of Twickenham to the newly-discovered seaside. Here the twice-widowed woman lived very comfortably on her income of two thousand a year, till tiring of these sylvan delights, she reappeared in March, 1784, at her house in Park Street for the London season.

"A new constellation has lately made an appearance in the fashionable hemisphere, that engages the attention of those whose hearts are susceptible to the power of beauty." In these terms the *Morning Herald* announces its discovery of the new recruit to London society. "The widow of the late Mr. F—h—t has in her train half our young nobility; as the lady has not yet discovered a partiality for any of her admirers, they are all animated with hopes of success."

This year, observes Mr. Wilkins, marked Mrs. Fitzherbert's introduction to what may be called general society, for hitherto she had moved entirely within Catholic circles. Her sponsor was Lady Sefton, a Protestant connection of the Smythes, through whom she became acquainted with the famous Duchess of Devonshire, the Duchess of Gordon, and other leaders of society.

According to one account, it was in Lady Sefton's box that her kinswoman was first seen by the Prince of Wales. You can believe, also, in an earlier and more romantic encounter on the banks of the Thames and reconcile the two stories by supposing that George recognised in Lady Sefton's guest the "lady by the meads," and had her followed home. Our chief authority won't have this: "It is unlikely that the Prince, except for the mere love of intrigue, would have had



the lady followed home, for Lady Sefton was well known to him and he could have gone to her box and requested that Mrs. Fitzherbert should be presented to him. Besides, there were plenty who could have told him of the lovely Fitzherbert, who, if she were not in the Prince's set, was a lady of the first fashion, who had already created a sensation by her beauty. The Prince was a connoisseur in loveliness, but hers was of an unusual type. Her wealth of golden hair was unpowdered, the warm pallor of her cheeks was unrouged, her lustrous eyes were also innocent of art, and her sunny smile was guileless."

Her type was not altogether new to George. The guileless smile and artless manner had captured him before. It may indeed have been some faint reminder of a former flame which caused him to fall desperately in love with this twice-made widow, six years his senior. What charm she possessed apart from her physical beauty has not been clearly revealed to us. Her story has been told only by her kinsfolk and partisans, yet they have not left us any very distinct picture of the woman herself. Langdale assures us that "she resisted with the utmost anxiety and firmness the most flattering assiduities of the most accomplished prince of his age." That to his declaration of passion she returned the answer composed by Walpole for his niece, I can well believe. Nevertheless, the sight of that niece, enthroned *quand même*, as Her Royal Highness, the Duchess of Gloucester, must have dazzled her a little, and fired her ambition. The law had been altered since Lady Waldegrave's day; still. . . .

At all events when, one November morning, still in the year 1784, a party of gentlemen belonging to His Highness's household drove up to her door in Park Street and told her that she must come and see the Prince or his life was forfeited, she ultimately gave way. He had stabbed himself for love of her, they explained. How even the surgeon who was one of the party could have made her believe that her presence could heal a fatal wound, it is not easy to understand.

Mrs. Fitzherbert, indeed, "scented a trap," and refused to visit Carlton House except in the company of a lady of high character. The chaperon selected was the lovely Duchess of Devonshire, which is odd, seeing that her grace had also been the object of the Prince's love not so long before. On reaching Carlton House, George was found in bed, with a glass of brandy-and-water close at hand and blood sprinkled about the sheets. He told her that, unable to endure her cruelty, he had tried to kill himself. Nothing would induce him to live unless she consented to be his wife. To satisfy him, Maria allowed him to put on to her finger a ring kindly lent by the Duchess. The Prince expressed enormous relief and his readiness to go on living. Mrs. Fitzherbert was then driven off to Devonshire House, where a deposition was drawn up and signed by every member of the party—that is, in addition to the principals, by the Duchess, Lord Onslow, Lord Southampton, Mr. Edward Bouverie, and Mr. Keate, the surgeon. The deposition, Mrs. Fitzherbert told her kinsman, Lord Stourton, long years after, might for all she knew to the contrary, still be at Devonshire House.

At the same time she assured him that the Prince really had been wounded, for she had actually seen the scar. It has been suggested that Keate had "blooded" his Royal Highness to cool him. The woman when she also became cool, perceived that an elaborate trick had been played on her. Having written an indignant protest to Lord Southampton, she set off on the very next morning for the Continent, keeping her destination a secret.

This threw George into another frenzy. Various writers in the same terms testify to the violence of his emotions. He rolled on the floor, struck his forehead, tore his hair, fell into hysterics, swearing that he would forego the crown. abandon the country, sell his plate and jewels, and scrape together a competence to flee with his Maria to America. Nowadays the novelist would describe such behaviour as unmanly. In passing, however, we may remark that Henry II,

that undoubtedly tough sovereign, used to manifest his rage or despair by tearing the bedclothes to pieces with his teeth, while Frederick the Great on the news of a defeat would utterly lose heart and talk of suicide. Napoleon had no more control over his feelings than a spoilt child of five. This Prince of Wales got up from the floor, drank a lot more brandy and water, and set about tracing the fugitive. In this task he was assisted by his discreditable crony, the Duke of Orleans. He found her, I gather, at Plombières, in the Vosges, and began ceaselessly to bombard her with letters. He could not get at her, because the Heir-apparent is not permitted to leave the country without the King's authority, and this old George, who, of course, knew all about this latest infatuation, refused to give. In a conversation with Sir James Harris, British Ambassador at The Hague, the Prince declared with vehemence that he would never marry. "Frederick," he said, "will marry and the crown will descend to his children." This is interpreted as meaning that he had made up his mind to contract a morganatic marriage with Mrs. Fitzherbert, which would be valid at least in Hanover.

The widow returned to London at the end of 1785. She had been a whole year out of England and her soul was sick for the pungent odours of Mayfair and the pleasaunces of St. James's. If she replied to her lover's frantic effusions, her letters have not been divulged. Whether at such long range his wooing had melted her heart, I do not know; but it is certain that an understanding had been come to between them before she had been even a week in England. For as early as December 10th Fox addressed a long letter to the Prince (his political ally as well as his future sovereign), saying that he had heard of Mrs. Fitzherbert's return and had been told at the same time that he was about to take the very desperate step of marrying her. He goes on to point out that marriage with a Catholic would, under the Act of 1689, involve the Prince's renouncement of the succession; not, he goes on to argue, that a real marriage would be possible



under the recent Act of 1772. If a marriage were to be solemnised now and the Prince were to appeal to Parliament, when he was twenty-five, to have it legitimated, the status of any children born in the interval would be ambiguous and the reputation of the mother sullied. The children, it seems to Fox, would be most deserving of pity; "the more so because the more indications persons born in such circumstances give of spirits, talents, or anything that is good, the more will they be suspected and oppressed, and the more will they regret being deprived of what they must naturally think themselves entitled to."

"The sum of my humble advice," says the Whig statesman, "nay, of my most earnest entreaty, is this—that your Royal Highness would not think of marrying till you can marry legally. When that time comes, you must judge for yourself. . . . In the meantime, a mock marriage (for it can be no other) is neither honourable for any of the parties, nor with respect to your Royal Highness, even safe. This appears so clear to me, that if I were Mrs. Fitzherbert's father or brother, I would advise her not by any means to agree to it and to prefer any other species of connection with you to one leading to so much misery and mischief."

For the last piece of advice Fox is severely taken to task by critics. It is indeed hard to reconcile with his professed sympathy for any children born of the union; but seeing that the validity of a marriage had come to depend on half a dozen points of law and on hardly one consideration of morality, an eighteenth-century politician could not be expected to appreciate the vital difference between an illegal ceremony and a free informal union. George, an habitual liar, glibly replied: "Make yourself easy, my friend. Believe me, there not only is not, but never was any ground for these reports which of late have been so malevolently circulated."

At the moment of writing this, his Royal Highness was seeking a clergyman to marry him. Till quite recently it was supposed that he found one in the Rev. Johnes Knight,



who, however, shrank back from the responsibility at the last moment. Rumour had it, also, that the ceremony was finally performed by a priest of the bride's own faith. A great deal of mystery attached to the matter and the fact of the marriage itself might have been contested till, by permission of King Edward VII, Mr. Wilkins was enabled to examine the documents deposited at the end of Mrs. Fitzherbert's life in Coutts's Bank. Here he found, first, the actual certificate of marriage, which runs thus : " We, the undersigned, do witness that George Augustus Frederick, Prince of Wales, was married unto Maria Fitzherbert, this 15th day of December, 1785." The names of the witnesses are cut out, as with a pair of scissors, leaving the tail of the " g " belonging to the name Errington. The document bears the signatures, George P. and Maria Fitzherbert.

Other documents also seen by Mr. Wilkins prove that the witnesses were the bride's uncle and brother, Henry Errington and Jack Smythe. The officiating clergyman was the Rev. Robert Burt, who got five hundred pounds down and the comfortable living of Twickenham as the reward for his services. If this seems generous pay, it must be remembered that the penalties of *præmunire*, with which the Royal Marriage Act threatened all the parties, meant nothing less than imprisonment during the King's pleasure, the forfeiture of all lands, goods and chattels, and worst of all, the loss of all civil rights, so that no man knowing the culprit could safely harbour him or even succour him in case of starvation !

This being the first marriage contracted in defiance of George III's Act and the only one so contracted, as far as we know, by a prince who became King of England, it is interesting to look at it a little closely. How did the parties look upon it ? George may be dismissed. It is safe to say he went through the ceremony because he could get Maria no other way. Considering that she was a member of the Roman Church, we are first struck by the fact that she submitted to being married by a clergyman of the Church of England.

No doubt she would have preferred one of her own communion ; but the heir to the British throne undoubtedly jibbed at the idea of being married even in secret by a " Popish priest." And here we must again remind ourselves of the old view of marriage once universally held throughout Christendom and perfectly sound for Catholics living in countries, like England, where the decrees of the Council of Trent had not been promulgated. In a large number of novels of recent date we are harrowed by the distressing situation of two young people—one generally a strong, silent man—who find themselves alone together on a desert island but *cannot marry because no parson or registrar is to be obtained*. The situation, even to the most legalistic mind, need present no difficulty, since the people on a desert island might proclaim themselves its sovereigns and draft laws for their own benefit ; but it is amazing that authors reared in a Christian country should write such nonsense. The doctrine of marriage, according to the Catholic Church, is simply stated by the *Dublin Review*: " She teaches that the marriage contract itself, which is perfected by the words, ' I take thee for my wife ' on the part of the man, and ' I take thee for my husband ' on the part of the woman, or by any other words or signs by which the contracting parties manifest their intention of taking each other for man and wife, is a sacrament." That is, in the absence of any special decrees, such as those of the Council of Trent, to the contrary. Mrs. Fitzherbert would, therefore, rightly look on the ceremony performed by an Anglican priest as sacred and binding ; a view which was confirmed by Rome in her lifetime and to which I imagine no Churchman of any kind would dissent. Of course, to Fox and non-religious people, the necessity or virtue of any ceremony at all, unless it had legal advantages, would not have been apparent.

The marriage took place behind locked doors. " What led this pure and proud woman," speculates her latest biographer, " with her definite ideas of right and wrong, to consent to an act which, if not wrong in itself, was at least capable of

wrongful interpretation ? ” He acquits her of any interested motive ; admitting that she had been twice married, he pleads that both these marriages had been arranged for her by others—which could hardly be true of the second—and that in marrying the Prince she was consulting her heart for the first time. This seems to me rather too romantic a view. Maria Fitzherbert at no time appears to us as a lovesick, passionate woman. Doubtless she cared for George ; but the glamour of royalty counted for something also, and I suspect she cared quite as much for the Prince of Wales.

The rumour of the marriage got abroad in a surprisingly short time. Within that same month (December) a number of people were writing to each other to tell the great news—or to contradict it. Mr. Wilkins does not attempt to explain this. And seeing who were the witnesses at the secret wedding, one surely need not search any further for the source of the report. The Prince was stated to have taken a box for Mrs. Fitzherbert at the Opera and to have passed the night with her. With such rumours flying about, a woman’s brother could not very well be expected to keep his mouth shut. She herself would not speak. But she moved from Park Street to St. James’s Square, to be nearer to Carlton House, and like Lady Waldegrave more than twenty years before, let it be inferred that she was the Prince’s wife as far as was consistent with safety under the conditions imposed by the new Act. What told exclusively with her co-religionists was that she continued to be visited by her confessor and to attend Mass at the chapel in Warwick Street. This went to prove that she was either wife to the Prince or nothing to him. The leaders of society accepted her as before. Evidently they were of opinion that Mrs. Fitzherbert was not the kind of person to throw her cap over the mill. The rumour, of course, reached the King, and completed the estrangement between him and his heir. As to Queen Charlotte, whatever conclusion she drew, she was determined not to repeat the mistake she had





Mrs. Fitzherbert.





made with regard to the Duke of Gloucester's wife. Mrs Fitzherbert was no longer invited to Court.

Otherwise she had certainly gained, not lost, by her third marriage. She acted as hostess at Carlton House, presided over the Prince's Court (a more brilliant one than his father's), and was treated by him with profound deference and courtesy. "She had to set up an establishment in London, and to entertain him when he wished. Entertaining the Prince was a very expensive matter indeed. Mrs. Fitzherbert lived as quietly and unostentatiously as she could, but these things necessarily increased her expenditure. The Prince was nothing if not generous, and he would have given her half his income at the time if it had been within his power. He had no idea of the value of money, but Mrs. Fitzherbert knew too well of his embarrassments, and would not accept from him a penny more than the sum necessary to meet the extra expenses now entailed upon her, which she estimated at £3,000 a year. That sum was accordingly given to her by the Prince. This, with her jointure of £2,000 a year, she considered to be sufficient. True, the Prince made her valuable presents of jewellery and plate and furniture towards her new establishment. She tried in vain to check his liberality, though the money he spent on her was but a drop in the ocean of his debts." \*

These debts were so pressing that in the summer following the marriage George was obliged to shut up the greater part of Carlton House, to reduce his establishment, and to sell the contents of his stables by public auction. Then he went off to Brighton, his wife following on July 24th, 1786. He lived at the Pavilion, she in a modest house with green shutters close by. They walked about together and it looked as though under her influence he had turned over a new leaf. All through the winter he persevered in his policy of economy and retrenchment, but it was obvious that he could only be

---

\* Wilkins, *op. cit.*

extricated from his difficulties by the action of the King or the Government.

His supporters feared that the moment any proposal of the kind was made to Parliament, the rumour of his marriage would be sifted. That is what actually happened. One, Alderman Newnham, having asked the Ministers if they intended to relieve the Prince from his financial embarrassments, another M.P., named Rolle, contrived to drag in the question of the marriage in a veiled fashion and to press for answers. Nobody would have cared what were his Royal Highness's relations with Mrs. Fitzherbert had she not been a Catholic; but behind her, in the diseased imagination of a large section of the public, loomed the fell Jesuit, the horrid Inquisitor, and the Scarlet Woman. It must be remembered that in the eighteenth century Rome was as great a bogey and bugbear to Englishmen as the shocking Bolshevik is at the present moment.

Sheridan came down from the House to warn the Prince of the storm that was brewing. He also saw Mrs. Fitzherbert, who "told them that she knew she was like a dog with a log tied round its neck and they must protect her." What sort of protection she looked for is not clear. When Rolle's motion came on for discussion on April 30th, 1787, Fox denied the Prince of Wales's marriage in these terms: "His Royal Highness had authorised him to declare that as a peer of Parliament, he was ready in the other House to submit to any, the most pointed questions, which could be put to him respecting it, or to afford His Majesty or His Majesty's Ministers the fullest assurances of the fact in question, which never had, and common sense must see, never could have happened." Rolle remained incredulous and questioned further. Whereupon Fox averred "that the fact not only never could have happened legally, but never did happen in any way whatsoever, and had from the beginning been a base and malicious falsehood. He spoke from direct authority."

This denial might be described like the Royal Marriage Act

itself, as "a midnight, dark, hellish business." The lie was of a rather more definite and emphatic character than is usual with statesmen. It could hardly be classed with "the terminological inexactitudes" which grease the wheels of policy. Some people, wishing to exonerate Fox, say that he based his assertion on the Prince's letter to him written before the marriage. This, in the words of the Pasha, "is but bosh." When a man stands up and says that a certain thing never has happened and never could happen, basing that asseveration on something he was told sixteen months previously, he is obviously taking his chances with truth. But who can suppose that in the ten days which elapsed between Alderman Newnham's unfortunate question and the final debate, the Whig leader had not been in consultation with the most interested party and told what to say? That the Prince of Wales was a liar goes without saying; but Fox knew he was that, and lied with him.

Whether they could have done anything else is another matter. The marriage was illegal and void in England. By proclaiming it, George would have forfeited his right to the throne of Britain. As an honourable man, he had one course open to him—he might have gone to Hanover, where the Act, of course, did not run, avowed the marriage, and thrown himself upon the protection of Hanoverian law. The rights of his Catholic consort would certainly have been backed by the Emperor, who was, it need hardly be said, a Catholic himself. That would have been the heroic as well as the picturesque thing to do; but George, afterwards fourth of that name, was not heroic, and even for the sake of the picturesque, which he did indeed favour, was not prepared to sacrifice three crowns.

"The Prince," says Langdale, "called the morning after the denial on Mrs. Fitzherbert. He went up to her and, taking hold of both her hands and caressing her, said, 'Only conceive Maria, what Fox did yesterday. He went down to the House and denied that you and I were man and wife! Did you



ever hear of such a thing ? ' Mrs. Fitzherbert made no reply, but changed countenance and turned pale."

It appears she was angry, not so much because of the denial as because of the manner of the denial. Fox, she said, had rolled her in the kennel like a street-walker. She would never forgive him. George, of course, repudiated his henchman. But he dared not give him the lie openly. Sheridan, at his instructions, got up in the Commons and tried to mend matters. After referring to his royal highness's feelings, he observed that "there was another person entitled in every honourable and delicate mind to the same attention, whom he would not otherwise attempt to describe, or allude to, except to affirm that ignorance or vulgar malice alone could have persevered in attempting to injure one on whose conduct truth could fix no reproach, and whose character claimed and was entitled to the truest and most general respect." (The subordinate clause runs into ninety-six words !) To the credit of the House, this long-winded epitaph was received with general approval. Probably it was concluded that Mrs. Fitzherbert, knowing that no legal union was possible, had given herself to the Prince for better or for worse, and was, therefore, quite as much entitled to respect as the woman with the longest marriage lines in the country.

That was not a view, however, which would have been shared by the aggrieved lady herself. We learn that George had once more to threaten suicide before she would forgive him. Yet she must have known at the moment she married him that he would repudiate the marriage if challenged. The only alternative, as I have said, was Hanover, and it is not on record that the injured wife ever suggested that way of escape.

Whether Fox was believed or not, society continued to open its arms to the woman who, he had declared, was not the Prince's wife. Indeed, she was now at the heyday of her career. Thanks to Fox's lie, Parliament had voted £161,000 for the payment of the Prince's debts and £60,000 for the

completion of Carlton House. The King, moreover, came down with another ten thousand a year, because the Prince was so dutiful a son as not to have married the woman he was living with. Oh, these royal moralities ! Nor did Mrs. Fitzherbert's nice sense of propriety prevent her enjoying the prosperity which had been purchased with her reputation. She reigned at the Brighton Pavilion and, on her return to town, at a mansion in Pall Mall which George had taken and furnished for her. Mary Frampton describes one of her assemblies as the most splendid she was ever at.

Nobody who knew this Prince of Wales, except perhaps his wife herself, could have expected him to stick to her all his life. Few princes continued very long on marital terms with the consorts soldered to them as strongly as the law and the Church could contrive. And "Florizel's" tie with Maria was a far more dangerous one for him than would have been the other species of connection so much preferred by Fox. Already it had very nearly entailed upon him financial ruin. In December, 1788, it seemed like to cost him his crown. George III was pronounced to be insane and the question of the regency was mooted. Up jumped Rolle in the House of Commons and called attention to the Act of Settlement, proposing to add to the clause barring anyone who should marry a Papist, the words, "or shall at any time be proved to be married, in fact or in law, to any Papist." The amendment was rejected as superfluous, but in the debate it became evident that Fox's denial was by no means accepted as final. It is creditable to the Prince that, though badly scared, he ignored the hints of his political friends and did not separate from Maria. She, rather injudiciously, took an active part in the pro-regency campaign. But it was all brought to naught by George III's recovering the few wits he had ever possessed.

The Prince of Wales and his wife resumed their merry life at Brighton and in Mayfair, going the pace, as we should say, and piling up debts. At one time, the bailiffs took

possession of Mrs. Fitzherbert's house in Pall Mall, and her husband had to pledge his own jewels to get rid of them. If Maria really cherished the Victorian ideals of respectability and decorum attributed to her by her partisans, we must presume she was led into these reckless courses in order to keep step with George. Outside Brighton she seems never to have been popular with the masses, probably on account of her religion. So many scurrilous attacks were made upon her that at last she took action, with the result that the author of a libel had to pay a heavy fine and go to prison for a year. This quelled the slanders for a time.

Wilkins sees in her efforts to provoke a reconciliation between the Prince and his parents another proof of her disinterestedness. On the other hand, it is not very obvious what she had to gain by keeping them apart. In point of fact, when peace was patched up in March, 1791, "the attitude of the King and Queen towards her changed from dislike to benevolent reserve." "They" accepted Fox's denial, and treated the story of the marriage as a fabrication," says the same authority.

His Majesty's behaviour towards another son proves that he held a marriage sacred only so far as it conformed to the law he had himself made. The annulment of the Duke of Sussex's marriage with Lady Augusta Murray, in 1793, was a bad blow to Maria Fitzherbert. Her only hope of becoming Queen of England, if ever she indulged it, lay in her husband's repealing the Royal Marriage Act and amending the Act of Settlement upon his accession to the throne.

But it became painfully evident that she would not be able to hold him so long. His bottomless extravagance forced the Prince to his knees again. This time his father refused to help him unless—he married. He might have recoiled (though I think it unlikely) from this supreme treachery if he had not fallen in love, just then, with the Countess of Jersey. Thus, Maria became a double hindrance to him. In June, 1794, according to Lord Stourton, once having



made up his mind, he acted promptly. " Her first separation from the Prince was preceded by no quarrel or even coolness and came upon her quite unexpectedly. She received, when sitting down at the table of the Duke of Clarence, the first intimation of the loss of her ascendancy over the affections of the Prince ; having only the previous day received a note from His Royal Highness, written in his usual strain of friendship, and speaking of their engagement to dine at the house of the Duke of Clarence. The Prince's letter was written from Brighton, where he had met Lady Jersey."

Few readers, I surmise, will be content to believe that the wife " withdrew without a word," and treated her dismissal with silent contempt. Let us frankly admit that the letters which must certainly have passed between them have not been found. Hers, it may be guessed, would not have been the kind a man would keep ! She went abroad and returned in September to Marble Hill. In November she learnt positively that George was going to wed his cousin, the Princess Caroline of Brunswick.

How she took the news, again, we don't know. What may surprise some is that she did take the annual allowance of £3,000 which the Prince's lawyers informed her would be continued. The King guaranteed its payment in the improbable event of his son's predeceasing him. The discarded wife speaks of George III with gratitude. Not till the royal wedding actually took place do we hear of her giving way to any emotion. Then, says somebody, she fainted away.

She rallied, and in the summer of 1796 was entertaining at No. 6, Tilney Street, Park Lane. We are told that socially she never stood higher than in that year, following her formal and positive repudiation by the Prince of Wales. This is bewildering. Society in those days must have been very kind or very lax. Either Maria Fitzherbert had been the Prince's kept woman or the Prince was a bigamist. Perhaps, knowing George, people waited to see what would happen.

What did happen, as we all know, is that the Prince



separated from the Princess a year after the wedding and tried at once to get back to his wife. Caroline, who used to joke about Maria as "fair, fat and forty," is said to have expressed the hope that she herself would constitute no impediment to the reunion. The Pope was consulted by Mrs. Fitzherbert, and towards the end of 1799 His Holiness gave his ruling. Maria was undoubtedly the wife of George and she was free to return to him, if he was truly penitent and displayed a firm purpose of amendment. George, who had fallen in love with Maria over again or simply yearned for someone to treat him kindly after his rough handling by Caroline, was no doubt ready with promises. At any rate, he had "put away" the strange woman—to the great indignation of the domesticated British public. Soon after the New Year (1800) he and Mrs. Fitzherbert began to appear together in public again; six months later, she formally announced the reconciliation by giving a party at her house "to meet the Prince of Wales."

They lived together for another eight years—a period which the wife alluded to as the happiest in her life. "She used to say that they were extremely poor but as merry as crickets." Of course, it was difficult for them to make ends meet. She only had five thousand a year of her own, her husband a mere twenty or thirty thousand, and for lodging they had to make shift with Carlton House, the Pavilion at Brighton, and her own house in Park Lane. But though they hadn't much money, as the saying goes, they did see life. Especially at Brighton, which became Maria's principal place of residence—as it remained the only spot in the kingdom where she was genuinely and generally popular. Naturally she was suspected by many as being the cause of the Prince's estrangement from his official wife. At the time of "the delicate investigation" into her royal highness's morals, feeling against the Popish woman ran very high. She was so much frightened that, fearing lest her house should be attacked and ransacked, she burned many of her most important

papers and mutilated her precious marriage certificate, in the way above described.

The royal family stood by her at this crisis, but her husband could ill endure the gale of unpopularity blowing against his own household. Besides, Maria was now over fifty and he but a lively buck of forty-six. In or about the year 1807 his wife's influence over him was completely eclipsed by that of the Marchioness of Hertford, a dignified *grande dame*, with whom it is hard to imagine any but the most blasé roué falling in love. For a while the unhappy wife was forced to lend a sort of countenance to "this intellectual adultery." Lady Hertford's husband was the legal guardian of a little girl, Mary Seymour, who, after long and embittered litigation, had been suffered to remain in Mrs. Fitzherbert's care. At a word from her rival, therefore, George's wife could be deprived of the creature to whom above all others she was attached.

A strong protest had already been made by Maria, notwithstanding, when the Prince at last became regent in 1810. Upon Lady Hertford's advice, George decided that this was the moment to recover popularity by breaking with his old advisers and with the Papist woman. At a fête given to inaugurate his regency, no place was reserved for Mrs. Fitzherbert. She waited on him and asked him why this was. "Madam," replied the royal cad, "you know you have no place." A few weeks later a definite separation was arranged, through the Duke of York. Mrs. Fitzherbert never again opened her doors to the Prince Regent. From all court functions his official wife also was excluded. "The Princess of Wales," says Lady Charlotte Bury, "speaks highly of Mrs. Fitzherbert. She always says, 'That is the Prince's true wife. She is an excellent woman. It is a pity he ever broke with her.'"

The unofficial wife took her dismissal or abdication very philosophically, much absorbed in her adopted daughter, and often wondering, I doubt not, after the manner of elderly ladies, what women could see in men. She lived at Sherwood

Lodge, Battersea, entertained a good deal, made no scruple of visiting Brighton, and continued her acquaintance with the royal dukes. The accession of her husband to the throne in 1820 made no difference in her way of life. She never seems for an instant to have imagined herself Queen. On the contrary, when the notorious divorce trial between George and Caroline came on, she dreaded lest she should be dragged into the case. She very nearly was, for the Queen's counsel had made up his mind if things went against his client, to proclaim the King's previous marriage and to challenge his right to the throne.

It is the biographer's dismal task to pursue his subject into old age, an old age frequently irrelevant to what has gone before. Mrs. Fitzherbert, as she continued to call herself, lived to be eighty-two, always frequenting the best society, continuing to the last to take pleasure in the domestic happenings of her circle and in the petty events which interest idle and opulent old ladies. When she heard that her husband was dying, she wrote to him to express her concern. George IV is said to have read the letter with emotion, to have placed it under his pillow, and never to have acknowledged it. He died, a day or two later, on June 25th, 1830. His widow was told, perhaps to comfort her, that he was buried with a locket containing her miniature hanging from his neck. When William IV came to Brighton, the old lady showed him her marriage certificate, and by the new King's orders she was treated by the royal family as one of themselves. She shared their apprehensions and spoke bitterly against the "horrid Radicals." She seemed in fact more disturbed by the passing of the Reform Bill than she had been elated by the Catholic Emancipation Act. She was greatly relieved when the King confirmed the allowance which his brother had made her—"without which," she complained, "I should be penniless"—though she had always the £2,000 a year settled on her by her second husband. When her life was drawing to its close she began to worry what would become of the papers relating

to *the subject*. She always referred in these terms to her secret marriage. The Duke of Wellington, then and for years after the most powerful man in England, thought it inexpedient to publish the fact. How it could have injured anybody, seeing that George IV had left no children, I am at a loss to understand. So an exchange of letters and documents took place. All were burnt with the exception of the actual marriage certificate and four other documents in support of it. These, at Mrs. Fitzherbert's request, were placed in a sealed envelope and deposited in Coutts's Bank, not to be inspected without the knowledge of Wellington and her kinsman, Lord Stourton.

Probably it was the old lady's intention to break the seals and proclaim herself the widow of King George IV, upon the death of the reigning sovereign or just before her own. Finally, she seems, with the apathetic weariness of old age, to have left her rehabilitation, if any were necessary, to posterity. She died at Brighton, on March 27th, 1837, three months before her friend, William IV. And the positive rehabilitation did not take place, we know, till 1905, and then by the chivalrous exertions of an English man of letters and the good-will of King Edward VII.

As the only indubitable private or morganatic wife of an English King, Maria Fitzherbert has attracted more attention from British writers and historians than any of the other women whose stories are contained in this book. She has been fortunate in finding only sympathisers and apologists. She was not, in herself, an interesting or dignified personage. She cared for George with no juvenile ardour, accepting his first breach with her with haughty indifference. I don't suppose she was venal or avaricious, but it cannot be denied that she took the sweet with the bitter and thoroughly enjoyed her gay and extravagant life as the Prince of Wales's recognised companion. I, for one, would have liked her better if she had not taken the allowance he made her upon her dismissal. It cannot be pretended that she had a very large measure of pride or delicacy. She went on living with the man after



he had formally repudiated her through the mouth of Fox, even after he had married another woman ! Yet what had she to fear ? Not beggary, for she always had that two thousand a year ; not the vague and obsolete penalties of *præmunire*, for she could have made her proclamation from abroad. In no letter that has been produced is there any allusion to a pledge of secrecy such as the Duke of Gloucester extracted from his bride. Maria Fitzherbert was not the least bit of a heroine. It is comforting to reflect that she probably suffered less from the falseness of her position than vast numbers of her sex would suffer. I half suspect that in the ease and affluence of her declining years she found no reason to regret her challenge to society.

XI

AUGUSTA, ELECTORAL PRINCESS OF HANOVER

IN the case of George IV and Mrs. Fitzherbert, the Royal Marriage Act, passed by command of that professedly moral sovereign George III, enabled a scoundrel to repudiate his wife and to commit bigamy. In another case, the Prince happening also to be a man of honour, the law operated, as it was intended to do, against the innocent parties. Lady Augusta Murray, electoral Duchess in and of Hanover, one of the victims, was a more interesting woman than the Roman Catholic widow and on the whole more deserving of sympathy.

Her story will not take so long in the telling.

The roll of George III's sons seems endless. Augustus Frederick, born in 1773, afterwards Duke of Sussex, came a long way down the list. Among so many he might well have escaped all notice ; but it seems that early in the day, King George or Queen Charlotte observed a small boy about the palace, wearing the colours of a political personage highly obnoxious to their Majesties. The child was identified as Prince Augustus, and was sent to bed without his supper for thus parading his more or less Liberal views. To keep him from contamination, or because George held the belief that a prince could not be properly educated in England, the boy when he reached his teens was sent to the university of Göttingen—a centre of learning scathingly referred to by Heinrich Heine as a sort of "limbo." Later, on account of his health, he was sent to Italy with a governor, though the

period—the winter of 1792-93—made travelling on the Continent distinctly unsafe for royalty.

In Rome he made the acquaintance of the Countess of Dunmore, whose husband, previously Governor of the American Provinces of New York and Virginia, was still in the New World governing the Bahamas. But the Countess had her daughters with her. With the eldest of these, Lady Augusta Murray, Prince Augustus fell in love.

As in so many other romances of this sort, the girl was six or seven years older than the swain, who had not yet turned twenty. The youth, as we used to say, found that his passion was returned. The sons of George III, when they are remembered at all, appear to most people as gouty, stuffy, bibulous old gentlemen whom no one could be imagined loving. But, it need not be insisted, they were not always like that; and even in his old age this particular Prince was a genial, chatty person, with advanced ideas and a taste for learning. Augusta certainly fell in love with Augustus—perhaps more mildly than he, but the man always does feel it more. The Prince behaved like a lovesick Quixote—as his eldest brother, indeed, behaved on the like occasions. But Lady Augusta had heard about that fatal Act. His Royal Highness records her attitude.

“The well-known accomplishments of my wife caught my peculiar attention. After four months’ intimacy, by which I got more particularly acquainted with all her endearing qualities, I offered her my hand, unknown to her family, being certain beforehand of the objections Lady Dunmore would have raised had she been informed of my intention. The candour and generosity my wife showed on this occasion by refusing the proposal and showing me the personal disadvantages I should draw on myself, instead of checking my endeavours, served only to add new fuel to a passion which already no earthly power could evermore have extinguished.”

There were, I suppose, long and frantic discussions in the Borghese Gardens. You may picture Lady Augusta, her hands on the balustrade, looking across Rome, while her

Prince, her Augustus, one hand holding his hat, the other pressed to his heart, protested undying devotion. Perhaps he followed the practice of southern lovers and was to be seen watching her window at night. At length, since nothing short of it would satisfy him, she consented to an exchange of troths.

Augustus meant this to be a serious business indeed. It was, as he afterwards expressly stated, at his suggestion that they committed their vows to writing in these terms:—"On my knees before God our Creator, I, Augustus Frederick, promise thee, Augusta Murray, and swear upon the Bible, as I hope for salvation in the world to come, that I will take thee, Augusta Murray, for my wife, for better for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness as in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part, to love but thee only and no other, and may God forget me if I ever forget thee.

"The Lord's name be praised. So bless me, so bless us, O God! And with my handwriting do I, Augustus Frederick, this sign, March 21st, 1793, at Rome, and put my seal to it and my name—Augustus Frederick."

And Lady Augusta signed a corresponding engagement.

Considering the solemn and precise terms of this undertaking, I cannot see how the signatories could be released by any power on earth, unless it were proved by medical experts that either was incapable of knowing what he or she was doing. To maintain that such engagement can be dissolved by the act of third parties is to deny the sanctity of contract altogether. Nay, more: it is to deny the individual's freedom of will and power to dispose of his own person. To me it seems that Augustus and Augusta were as truly married as though the Pope, assisted by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Registrar-General, had conducted the ritual.

However, being English, the two young people hesitated to proceed further till their troth had been repeated in the presence of a third party. A likely one was found in an English clergyman named Gunn, who happened to be visiting



Rome. The Prince invited him to "marry" them (they were, of course, already married), but the parson hung back, remembering the English law. To overcome his scruples, Augustus said that honour was involved, and ingenuously told this to Augusta. She was at once up in arms. "As for honour," she wrote, "with the meaning Mr. Gunn will attach to it, I am ashamed to fancy it—he will imagine that I have been your mistress, and that humanity, commonly termed honour, has induced you to pity me and so veil my folly by an honourable marriage. . . . Tell Mr. Gunn that you love me, that you are resolved to marry me, that you have pledged your sacred word; tell him that upon the Bible you have sworn it, that I have done the same, and that nothing shall ever divide us; but don't let him imagine that I have been vile. Do this, my only love, but pray take care of the character of your wife, of your Augusta."

The Reverend Gunn's scruples appear at last to have been overcome. It was now the girl who hung back. Augustus had finally to resort to the appeal *ad misericordiam* which his brother found successful as a means of dragging Mrs. Fitzherbert to Carlton House. But the younger Prince was no doubt absolutely sincere when, on April 4th, 1793, he wrote: "Will you allow me to come to you this evening? It is my only hope. Oh, let me come and we will send for Mr. Gunn. . . . More than forty-eight hours have I passed without the smallest nourishment. Till when I am married, I will eat nothing. If Gunn will not marry us, I shall die . . ." etc., etc.

To which Augusta replied at once: "My treasure, my dearest life and love, how can I refuse you? You shall come if you wish it, you shall do as you like, my whole soul rejoices in the assurance of your love, and to your exertions I will trust. I will send to——; but I fear the badness of the night will prevent his coming. My mother has ordered her carriage at past seven, and will not, I fear, be out before the half-hour after. To be yours to-night seems a dream I cannot make out" . . . etc., etc.

The bad weather notwithstanding, the parson appeared at the Albergo Samiento, where the Murrays were staying, and there the marriage was celebrated according to the ritual of the Church of England. And the Prince endorsed the original contract in his own hand, "Completed at Rome, April 4th, 1793."

Augusta now deemed herself well and truly married, and became the Prince's wife in fact, though she contrived to hide their relations from Lady Dunmore. Realising at last that she was going to have a child, she confessed. From this point onwards, the unfortunate girl does not appear to have got much active support from her own family. Her husband having been advised that the marriage might be contested, not only under the provisions of the Royal Marriage Act but because it had taken place outside the English jurisdiction, returned to London with his wife in order to have it repeated. Augusta went to the curate of St. George's, Hanover Square, and directed him to put up the banns of marriage between "Augusta Murray, spinster, and Augustus Frederick, bachelor." She had been married, she explained, while on the Continent, to "Mr. Frederick," who was younger than she, and in such cases, in her family, it had always been the rule to renew the ceremony publicly. No one suspected who "Mr. Frederick" was, and they were married by the curate on December 5th, 1793. Immediately after, Lady Augusta went down into Essex. There, on January 13th, she gave birth to a boy.

Concerned, it may be surmised, for her reputation, she showed her latest marriage certificate to someone—a doctor or midwife—who attended at her confinement. The husband's description struck this person as suspicious and the rumour at last reached the ears of Lord Loughborough, the Lord Chamberlain. Enquiries were made at St. George's, and the King was informed that his own Act had been set at defiance by one of his own sons.

Augustus had left England three days after his son's birth, perhaps because he was afraid, perhaps, lest his attendance

on his wife might arouse suspicion. The matter was first enquired into by the Privy Council. Lord Eldon, then Attorney-General, had diverting recollections of the proceedings. "The lady's mother was much questioned by Lord Thurlow, with a view to proving that, her daughter being much older than the Duke (he was then simply a Prince), the young man had been taken in. She could not, however, recollect what her daughter's age was. The clergy were called to account for having published the banns without knowing the parties or their place of residence. The rector first appeared; he said he had two most respectable curates, and he always enjoined upon them most solemnly not to marry parties without having first enquired about their residence. The curates were then called, and they said there was a most respectable parish clerk, who always wore a gown, and that they had always given most solemnly a like injunction to him. The clerk was then called and declared that no man in the parish had a more excellent, careful wife than he had, and that he daily gave her most solemnly the like injunction. She then made her appearance and said she must sometimes be about her own, and not about parish business, but that she had two female servants as discreet as any in the parish, and she had always given them the like solemn injunction, when anybody brought a paper about the publication of banns in her and her husband's absence, to make proper enquiries about the parties' residence.

"All this put Lord Thurlow out of humour, and he then said to me angrily, 'Sir, why have you not prosecuted, under the Act of Parliament, all the parties concerned in this abominable marriage?' To which I answered that it was a very difficult business to prosecute—that the Act, it was understood, was drawn by Lord Mansfield, and *Mr. Attorney-General Thurlow*, and *Mr. Solicitor-General Wedderburn*, and unluckily they had made all parties present at the marriage guilty of felony; and as nobody could prove the marriage except some person who had been present at it, there could be no prosecution, because nobody could be compelled to be a witness."

English statutes often are drawn that way. No doubt Eldon would have found a means of prosecuting if there had been a chance of hanging anyone. As it was, Heseltine, the King's Proctor, at once entered a suit in the Prerogative Court for the annulment of the marriage, and Lady Augusta was cited before she had recovered from her confinement. She was pursued with the utmost malevolence. Gunn, the parson who had married them, kept out of the way, dreading the punishment provided by the Act. Dillon, afterwards the injured woman's staunchest supporter, commenting on this, asks how he could fear to be called to account for acts done in a foreign jurisdiction! I think the reverend gentleman was a better judge. The Government of George III and such lawyers as Eldon and Thurlow would have troubled not at all about law or international comity once they had got him within their grasp.

The decree was what was to be expected of an English "ecclesiastical" court, which recognised no head but the King and preferred the law of the land to the laws of God and religion. Sir W. Wynne, Dean of the Arches, held on August 8th, 1794, that the second marriage was void, and that as regards the first at Rome, "there was not sufficient proof by witnesses that any such act, or rather show and effigy, took place."

Writing from Naples, Augustus Frederick had the manliness to protest against a sentence passed in his absence, in a suit to which he was no party himself. This letter is dated 1798. The intervening years he had spent on the Continent, probably by order of his father. In extenuation, it might be urged that he had no other means of subsistence than what his father allowed him. It would never have occurred to a son of George III to cut himself adrift from his family and try to earn his own living, as Swedish and Austrian princes have since done. Not that Augustus Frederick or his brothers would ever have commanded more than the meanest day-labourer's wage! What became of the wife in the meantime



I have been unable to ascertain. Such newspapers of the time as I have been able to consult are significantly silent about the whole business. They are busy recording the hangings of boys of fourteen for "the dreadful deed" of firing their master's barn, and in rousing the people of this happy island against the horrid French, who slew not children but real lords and ladies. Humanity has never looked at one with an uglier, baser countenance than in Great Britain during the later years of George III's reign. One is not astonished that America had hastened to cut the connection; one reads the ravings of Burke with incredulous indignation.

In such a society, the hapless deserted wife and her little son (named after his father) must have fared badly from the start. There is no record of any active intervention on her behalf by her family. Yet through them the whole peerage of England and Scotland had been insulted. "Lady Augusta, though a subject, could boast of royal descent on both sides. This fact might have led George III to pause before he cast a slur upon this virtuous woman, for her pedigree was an illustrious one, in a sense as illustrious as that of his consort from Mecklenburg-Strelitz. True, Lady Augusta was British and not German. On her father's side she could trace back her lineage, through the Stanleys, to the daughter of Henry VII of England; through the same line she could trace her descent from William I, Prince of Orange, and Louis, Duke of Montpensier; again from the same source she could show her descent from Charles VII of France. On the side of her mother, who was a Stuart, she could trace back her descent in the direct line to the Hamiltons, Dukes of Chatellerauld, and to James II, King of Scotland. Surely the daughter of an earl with a pedigree like this was as fit a mate for a younger son of the King of England as some obscure German princess?"

In a fire that broke out in the King's Bench prison reserved for debtors, in July, 1799, mention is made of a Lady Murray occupying one of the chambers. Considering the difficulties

which later on embarrassed her, I think it not unlikely that the imprisoned debtor was the wife of Prince Augustus. In the September of that year the pair came together again in Berlin, after more than five years' separation. The young man showed every intention of cleaving to his wife and son, and expressly affirmed the latter's legitimacy in a will which he executed at this time. In the Prussian capital Augusta was received with the ceremonial due to the wife of an Electoral Prince of Hanover.

They returned to London and lived at 40, Lower Grosvenor Street, where on August 11th, 1801, a second child, a daughter, Ellen Augusta, was born. The Prince was now nearing thirty. Whatever good there was in his breed expired with youth. He had got in touch with his family again and was created Duke of Sussex somewhere about this time. Quarrels began. Brother George, who was now living again with Mrs. Fitzherbert, proffered his mediation. There was talk of settlements, a separation was hinted at. Augustus went to Lisbon for the benefit of his health. His wife seems to have joined him there. Their dissensions became acute and she left him. "May God forget me if ever I forget thee," he had written. But that was in the past. Such was the end of love's young dream.

The rest is a sorry story, one of the most deeply disgraceful chapters in the history of this royal house. The Duke in the first year of the century was writing letters to his wife and son in London under their proper description—"Princess" and "Prince." Even after their formal separation, he denied all imputations against her character (instigated by the court party) and reaffirmed the legitimacy of their son. But in 1804, we find Augusta applying to the Court of Chancery to compel Messrs. Coutts to deduct from the Duke's funds, and to pay her, the £4,000 which he had engaged to allow her. Worse still, in the year 1809, he succeeded in getting Lord Moira appointed guardian to his children, on the ground, among others, that their mother was "bringing them up to

believe they were princes and princesses." Here again, the lawyers stretched their own bad, ridiculous laws in the Prince's favour; for if the children were illegitimate, as they, the attorne, ysmaintained, the father had no rights over them. It does not appear that Augusta was deprived of her children for long, however. About this time her brother, Lord Fincastle, deeming it polite to eat humble pie, addressed a curious letter to Lord Moira, declaring that he wanted only to obtain the favour and patronage of the royal family for his sister and her children. He offered excuses for "a schoolboy letter" from the young Electoral Prince, adding that "the fellow has a high spirit, and is of sufficient maturity to discover that some privileges of his birth have been denied to him."

How the injured lady was treated by the Princes and the Government may be gathered from her unpublished correspondence. In a letter to the Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool, dated September 26th, 1812,\* the Princess's staunch friend and adviser, Sir John Joseph Dillon, states positively that her allowance was guaranteed by the Prince of Wales, the principle of the negotiation being that the Duke of Sussex was merely the trustee and that the funds were to come out of the Treasury. Someone, probably Lord Liverpool, has pencilled against this: "Wants proof." Yes, but the Duke's wife wanted money. Writing to Mr. Perceval, she says: "When Mr. Pitt and Fincastle met on the subject of my affairs, it was agreed that if I gave up my suit in Chancery, cancelled the annuity bond of £4,000 per annum granted me by the Duke of Sussex on his establishment, as also the deed by which H.R.H. agreed to pay the rent of the house in Grosvenor Street—that if I made this sacrifice and ceased calling myself Duchess of Sussex, on his part, Mr. Pitt was to give me £4,000 a year."† This was to be paid quarterly and without any deduction. All debts contracted by Lady Augusta prior to Lady Day,

---

\* Additional MSS. Brit. Mus. 38571.

† Additional MSS. 38360.

1802, were to be paid off. Pitt (who stands out always in such noble contrast to his wretched contemporaries) told Fincastle that he did not wish to “*marchander*” with his sister, and proposed to treat her as a widow of the first distinction and to settle a pension on each of the children. In compliance with the private treaty arrived at, Augusta relinquished the titles of Princess and Duchess and consented to sign herself as Augusta de Ameland—the description being borrowed, for no reason that I can discover, from an island off the Dutch coast.

But Pitt was dead, and persistent efforts seem to have been made to cheat the woman and her children of their money as they had been cheated of their other rights. The allowance was always in arrear. “Will you believe, dear Mr. Perceval,” writes Her Highness from Ramsgate to the head of the Government, “that with all these incumbrances, my last quarter had not supplied me with money even sufficient to pay the wages due to my servants. The Duke of Sussex allows but £700 a year for the children. My boy costs me more than that—his tutor alone costs me above £300 a year. My girl must soon have masters as well as a governess (a governess is £100 a year). I cannot economise on my children, for so trifling a provision is made for them that unless I take much from my own income, I cannot do them justice.” The writer subscribes herself, “Your very obedient and obliged, but I hope to be still more obliged, Augusta de Ameland.”

No more letters have come to light and we can only hope that when the war being waged against civilisation was brought to an end, the poor lady got her money. What the bargain cost her is expressed in an earlier letter, given in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1843: “Had I believed the sentence of the ecclesiastical courts to be anything but a stretch of power, my girl would never have been born. Lord Thurlow told me my marriage was good abroad—religion taught me it was good at home, and not one decree of any powerful enemy could make me believe otherwise, nor ever will. By refusing



me a subsistence, they have made me take a name—not the Duke of Sussex's—but they have not made me believe I had no right to his. My children and myself were to starve, or I was to obey, and I obeyed ; but I am not convinced. Therefore, pray don't call this 'an act of mutual consent' or say 'the question is at rest.' The moment my son wishes it, I am ready to declare it was debt, imprisonment, arrestation, necessity (force like this, in short) which obliges me to seem to give up my claims, and not any conviction of their fallacy."

The Princess died at Ramsgate in 1830. Her husband, a better man, when all is said and done, than his brothers, had not gone through any bigamous marriage during her lifetime. I imagine that the easiest royal conscience might boggle at the terms of that solemn engagement in Rome. His son had grown up into a fine high-spirited lad, who entered the army and fought at New Orleans. He was styled Sir Augustus d'Este—a name to which indeed he had a double right, as both the Houses of Hanover and Murray claimed descent from that famous family. Upon the accession of his uncle, William IV, in June, 1830—three months after his mother's death—he took steps to assert his rights. Greville, in his memoirs, refers to the Duke of Sussex's annoyance. The son found his father's door closed, in consequence, for a time against him. He found a friend in another uncle, Queen Victoria's father, the Duke of Kent, whom Stockmar described as the only gentleman among George III's sons.

In 1831, Dr. Lushington, an ecclesiastical lawyer of repute, pronounced in favour of the Roman marriage. Daniel O'Connell, as an authority on Irish law, was uncomprisingly in favour of the unacknowledged Prince. His Highness Sir Augustus then laid his case before two of the most eminent jurists in Germany, who pronounced for the marriage and for his princely status. These opinions, with a respectfully worded memorial, were laid before the Hanoverian Cabinet. The reply was: That Lieut.-Colonel Sir Augustus d'Este's memorial having been laid before His Majesty (William IV),

the King did not consider the claims therein established and directed the Lieutenant-Colonel to take no further steps in the matter !

That is a short way of overriding the law. The unacknowledged Electoral Prince made one or two appeals, without direct result, to Queen Victoria, who, however, showed him some marks of favour. He might ultimately have obtained his rights ; but he died unmarried in 1848. Her Highness Ellen Augusta, his sister, married Lord Truro, afterwards Lord Chancellor of England.

The attitude of the English courts towards the wife and children of the Duke of Sussex constitutes one of the most impudent and flagrant violations of every principle of law and right that has been seen since the days of the Star Chamber. Morally, of course, the documents originally exchanged at Rome constituted a marriage. Legally, it was pointed out by the young Augustus's champion, Dillon, the sons of George III were Princes not only of Great Britain, but of Ireland and Hanover—two kingdoms to which the Royal Marriage Act did not apply. Prince Augustus Frederick, then, could be considered as married at Rome in his quality of an Irish or a Hanoverian Prince ; and the laws of those countries would uphold such a marriage. Moreover, as the German jurist argued, Lady Augusta Murray's lineage qualified her under the Imperial law for marriage with the member of a royal or electoral house on an equal footing. (Incidentally, her ancestors, the Stanleys, had been Kings of the Isle of Man, whereas at the time of her marriage her bridegroom's father was only Elector of Hanover.) Had his uncle, Ernest Augustus, King of Hanover, died without issue, Augustus " d'Este " could, and I doubt not would have claimed the succession. It would have been a barren one, since the kingdom was swallowed up by Prussia in 1866.

As to the Duke of Sussex, he lived till 1843, and was buried in Kensal Green cemetery. Some time after his first wife's death he married a widow named Lady Cecilia Buggin

—again in defiance of his father's statute. Queen Victoria kindly bestowed on the lady the more euphonious title of Duchess of Inverness. The Duke was President of the Royal Society, took a serious interest in art and science, and on the whole, but by no means consistently, supported Liberal and progressive movements. For one of his measures he must be detested. While Ranger of Hyde Park, he issued an order that all dogs found therein were to be shot. The order was actually executed, thirty or forty dogs having thus been murdered, till higher authority quashed the order and reminded the Duke that he was exceeding his lawful powers. He was popular, notwithstanding, at Brighton, where he died, and was revered by the Masonic body. But in the old coarse-featured convivial "taker of the chair" it is hard to recognise the generous, chivalrous youth who once thought his love was strong enough to set the world at defiance.

## XII

### THE FIRST AMERICAN PRINCESS

IN the fashionable world which crowds the race-courses, the casinos and the playgrounds of Europe, no figure is more prominent to-day than the American heiress married to the titled foreigner. A fashionable playwright has thought fit to devote a three-act play to the exclusive exposure of her frailties and expensive follies, the illustrated papers photograph her in every conceivable costume. But however largely these ladies may figure in the pages of the *Tatler* or *Vogue*, only one of them has left her mark on the page of history. Elizabeth Patterson, of Baltimore, the first of that invading army, never bore a title. But she was the sister-in-law of kings and queens. If her face did not exactly "launch a thousand ships," at least by her marriage with Jerome Bonaparte, she seriously thwarted the plans of the great Napoleon when he was bestriding the Old World like a Colossus, and caused a rupture between Emperor and Pope that was never healed. And all this before she had passed her twentieth year.

Elizabeth was born in Baltimore, on 6th January, 1785. Her father, William Patterson, was the second richest man in the state of Maryland. He hailed from Ulster and had the hard common sense and business capacity together with the dour temper common to the Scotch-Irish of that province. Sent to Philadelphia by his parents at the age of fourteen to begin his career on an office stool, only twelve years later,



as the result of shrewd shipping and commercial enterprise, he became the owner of a small fleet of sailing vessels and of a hundred thousand dollars in gold. Half his fortune he invested in real estate, the balance he put into a shipping business, determined to be safe both on land and sea. In a few years he had acquired a princely fortune, both as landed proprietor and as owner of a line of the celebrated Baltimore clippers. Both his ambition and his business ability he handed on to his daughter.

Elizabeth was the eldest of a family of thirteen brothers and sisters. Her girlhood seems to have been what one would expect in the family of a wealthy "small-town" merchant—humdrum and unexciting, but full of a petty eventfulness. Her father was very much master in his own house. "I always considered it my duty to my family," he observed late in his life, "to keep them as much as possible under my own eye, so that I have seldom in my life left Baltimore, either on business or pleasure. Ever since I had a house it has been my invariable rule to be last up at night . . . from which I found little risk from fires and managed to have my family keep regular hours." Elizabeth's mother, Dorcas Spear, belonged to a good colonial family, but her personality, as one would expect, seems to have been obliterated by her over-numerous family. She found time to supervise the education of her eldest daughter, which does not, however, appear to have reached a very high level. At any rate, Elizabeth's attainments did not much impress Pichon, the French Consul-General at Washington, for we find him writing to Talleyrand: "Like most young people in this country, she has had an education limited to very little." Though Pichon was biassed against Elizabeth, his estimate was probably correct, for the southern lady, according to Miss Putnam, was the worst educated of her class in the whole world. Probably to most cultured Frenchmen or Germans of the present day, the education of most Americans would seem to be "limited to very little." Elizabeth's favourite books, we

are told, were the "Maxims" of La Rochefoucauld, and that monument of dreariness, Young's "Night Thoughts." One may hazard a guess that the "Maxims" were congenial to her nature, while the "Night Thoughts" were imposed upon her as suitable reading for a young female. Her Scottish-Irish ancestry probably endowed her with wit and "parts" very much superior to the education she received. But at least she spoke French, while Jerome Bonaparte's English was of the smallest.

But whatever her education, there is no doubt whatever about Elizabeth Patterson's beauty. She is described as having "The pure Grecian contour," light chestnut hair, pink and white complexion and a small red mouth. Her eyes were "Large and dark, with an expression of tenderness that did not belong to her character," her figure was beautifully formed, her every movement full of grace. These are qualities which, even in these days of feminine emancipation, will carry a girl further than a University degree. She was, says M. Joseph Turquan, who is not otherwise enthusiastic about Miss Patterson, "A finished example of that Anglo-Saxon type which, when it sets out to be beautiful does not stop half way." Strangely enough she appears to have borne a resemblance to Pauline Bonaparte, the Princess Borghese, which struck Madame Junot, among others, at first sight. There is an unfinished picture of her, or, rather, three studies of her head, sketched by Gilbert Stuart in 1804, which bears out every word of the eulogies passed upon her. Europe was as enthusiastic about her looks as America. Elizabeth was perfectly conscious from the very first of her own superiority both in wit and beauty. Ambition was her leading quality. "You know that nature never intended me for obscurity," she wrote to her father, and probably she early came to despise the opportunities offered by her native town.

Baltimore, with its 4,000 inhabitants, could have offered little scope to the girl who was able to shine in the most brilliant society of Europe. "Whatever may be the great destinies

that Baltimore may develop," she jeered, "its pleasures have not yet dawned." The Hon. John P. Kennedy has left a lively picture of the little community as it was emerging at that time into a thriving commercial town.

"It was a treat to see this little Baltimore town . . . so conceited, bustling and debonair, growing up like a saucy, chubby boy . . . bursting incontinently out of his clothes in spite of all the allowance of tucks and selvage. Market Street had shot like a Nuremburg snake out of its toy-box . . . with its line of low-browed, hip-roofed wooden houses in a disorderly array standing forward and back, after the manner of a regiment of militia, with many an interval between the files. Some of these structures were painted blue and white and some yellow; and here and there sprang up a more magnificent mansion of brick with windows like a multiplication table, and great wastes of wall between the storeys, with occasional courtyards before them and reverential locust trees, under whose shade bevvies of truant schoolboys, ragged little negroes and grotesque chimney-sweeps 'skied coppers' and disported themselves at marbles.

"We had our seven hills then, which have been rounded off since, and that locality" (in the centre of the town) "presented a steep and barren hillside, broken by rugged cliffs and deep ravines, washed out by the storms of winter into chasms which were threaded by paths of toilsome and difficult ascent."

He goes on to speak of the "Gallants who upheld the chivalry of the age, cavaliers of the old school, full of starch and powder; most of them the iron gentlemen of the Revolution with leather faces—old campaigners, renowned for long stories." But a new epoch was beginning in the life of the little city. Streets were being paved and lighted, bridges built and commerce improving. Baltimore now boasted a courthouse, a bank, a circulating library and a big Presbyterian church—none of them institutions, it would seem, except the library, perhaps, likely to increase the volume of local gaiety. The generation of young men that was growing

upon the heels of the iron gentlemen with leather faces, must have been busy in counting-house or store, or possibly have sailed as captains of the clippers that set sail from the Chesapeake for the West Indies and the China Seas.

Such was the town in which Elizabeth Patterson grew to beautiful and pleasure-loving young womanhood. From an early age she accepted local belle, the ambitious girl must often have chafed at the narrow boundaries of her kingdom and "longed, like Alexander, to spread her conquests further." And suddenly into this prosperous but bourgeois milieu came without warning Lieutenant Jerome Bonaparte, of the French navy, whose brother, the great Napoleon, was shaking the old world to its very foundations.

The young naval officer, who was later to become notorious as the most finished rake and libertine in Europe, was at that time a sufficiently good-looking youth of twenty. Physically he was brave, gifted with natural wit and engaging manners, with a superficial good nature that concealed a frivolous yet ambitious disposition, and a cynical selfishness which had evolved into a system of managing his terrible but indulgent brother. "Jerome," says the Comte Chaptal, in his *Souvenirs*, "had natural intelligence, but it is difficult to find a young man vainer, worse brought up, more ignorant or more ambitious. When his brother was made head of the Government he was barely twelve years old, and he had been nourished ever since on flattery and debauchery. He is the most servile of Napoleon's courtiers, who repaid his docility with all the favours in his power." Napoleon had always had the most excellent plans for his youngest brother's education, read him severe lectures on his laziness and extravagance, and gave instruction that he was to be shown no favour on account of his position, but unfortunately circumstances and his own indulgence for the baby of the family always prevented these admirable counsels from bearing fruit. Jerome was over-supplied with pocket-money and very early learnt that, in spite of remonstrance, his debts, however unjustifiable, would



be paid. He was consumed with a passion for military glory, and his brother, believing that military discipline at any rate would be good for him, placed him in the Chasseurs de la Garde Consulaire. But an extraordinary duel, which gained him much applause and notoriety, forced him to leave the regiment. The combatants, armed each with a horse-pistol and twenty-five cartridges, agreed to pepper each other, without seconds or witnesses present, until one should be killed or the ammunition exhausted, each firing as he pleased. In this encounter Jerome received a bullet which remained flattened against his breast-bone until his death. Napoleon was furious at the episode, and decided to transfer his brother to the navy, an arm of the forces which he was exceedingly anxious to develop with a view to a collision with England. With his invincible belief in his own family, the First Consul may have believed that Jerome would one day prove a match for Nelson.

But the young man himself was highly displeased at the transfer and managed easily to fail in his preliminary examination. Napoleon curtly decreed that he should therefore start as a simple midshipman, "in order to make him work." But though a certain amount of the science of navigation was necessarily knocked into him, the leopard did not change his spots. Jerome's naval career, though he soon gained several steps in rank, displays the same devotion to his own comfort, the same erratic features, and the disobedience to orders that had characterised him hitherto. After returning from Hayti he threw himself so wholeheartedly into a life of wild debauchery that Napoleon sent him incontinently to sea again on board the brig *Epervier*, with the Antilles as destination. Here he distinguished himself by interfering with an English trading vessel, which episode helped to precipitate a revival of the war between the two countries. The English kept a special look-out for the *Epervier* and captured it, but the brother of the First Consul was not on board. Jerome, having received a furious order



Jerome Bonaparte, King of Westphalia.



from his brother to return to France, had decided that it would be considerably safer to return as a passenger on board a neutral vessel. Calmly, therefore, he deserted his ship.

And thus came Jerome Bonaparte to America.

Though a simple "lieutenant de vaisseau," he had judged it fitting to his rank to provide himself with a suite of four. These were the ship's doctor from the *Epervier*, Lieutenant Meyronnet, his second in command, Le Camus (a young Creole who remained his devoted secretary for many years and was rewarded with high rank in Westphalia), and another officer named Rewbell. Meyronnet was sent to Philadelphia to charter an American boat for the return, the others accompanied Jerome to Washington, whither he went to demand from the French Consul a sum of fifty thousand francs to cover his expenses. Pichon provided a substantial sum and agreed to the chartering of the *Clothier* at Philadelphia for ten thousand dollars. He also impressed upon the young lieutenant the need of preserving strict incognito.

But, till the vessel should be ready to sail on August 3rd, time hung heavy on Jerome's hands. His whole soul was longing for gaiety and dissipation. Philadelphia offered no attraction. Indeed, it is the natural impulse of anyone arriving at that port to leave it as soon as possible. He considered New York. Then came an invitation from Commodore Joshua Barney, a young American adventurer who had served with him in the West Indies, to visit Baltimore.

And so Jerome Bonaparte arrived in Elizabeth Patterson's home town, where his incognito simply did not run. The Americans of that day had all their descendants' love for the world's great ones, and Jerome's brother was the greatest man in Europe. Moreover, there was a strong French element in the town, which must have been excited by his arrival. Jerome was lionised and involved in a whirl of gaiety that was much to his taste. It must be remembered (in spite of Elizabeth's strictures on the dullness of Baltimore) that this was America before the passing of the Comstock laws, when manners



and morals were much the same as in eighteenth-century England and where slavery made possible a large-handed and magnificent hospitality in those mansions with windows "like multiplication tables." Jerome forgot all about the urgent nature of his mission to France. The *Clothier* awaited him at Philadelphia for a week beyond the day appointed for his departure and was then countermanded by the disgusted Pichon, who had made himself responsible for the cost. The Consul-General wrote to Jerome urging him to quit "the very unhealthy town of Baltimore," suggesting a tour in the western states for his amusement, and on another occasion a holiday to be passed with himself and his own wife. He pretended that Barney was a man of bad reputation. Jerome was polite but unmoved. He was thoroughly enjoying himself in Baltimore. And now there was an attraction much stronger than Barney's society. Lieutenant Bonaparte had met Elizabeth Patterson, and for the first and probably the only time in his rake's progress, fell in love.

There are many stories about that romantic first meeting. The young people seem to have first come face to face at a race meeting, where we are told, Elizabeth appeared "radiantly beautiful in a buff silk dress with a lace fichu and a Leghorn hat with tulle trimmings and black plumes." But it was at a ball a little later that he actually made her acquaintance, at the house of Barney's father-in-law, the Hon. Samuel Chase, one of the Maryland signatories to the Declaration of Independence. We are told that before the meeting he had scoffed at the notion that he could ever wish to marry an American girl—his friend Rewbell had succumbed at first sight to a friend of Elizabeth's. "Don't be so sure," Madame Rewbell mocked him. "Miss Patterson is so beautiful that to see her is to marry her." It amused Jerome after this to allude to the unknown beauty as "*ma belle femme*." No doubt he expected to find her a slightly rustic belle, so that Elizabeth's radiant beauty, self-assurance and fashionable bearing swept him the more easily off his feet. His passion

was heightened by her coquetry. No doubt she had heard of his not too-humorous jest at her expense, and meant to punish him. But very soon was it evident that the interest was mutual. The romance naturally enough aroused a storm of excitement in the small American town. The women-folk of the Patterson family were enthusiastic, some of the men believed that such an alliance could only be to the worldly advantage of the family. The representative of Spain in the United States, the Marquis d'Yrujo, from motives that may have been sinister or merely human, interested himself in the affair and finally conveyed to William Patterson a formal demand from Jerome Bonaparte for the hand of Elizabeth.

The hard-headed Ulsterman was not quite so enthusiastic about the match. In a letter written a few weeks after the marriage, to the United States Minister in Paris, he declares : " . . . I never, directly or indirectly, countenanced or gave Mr. Bonaparte any encouragement to address my daughter ; but on the contrary, resisted his pretensions by every means in my power consistent with discretion. Finding, however, that the mutual attachment they had formed for each other was such that nothing short of force and violence could prevent their union, I with much reluctance consented to their wishes." Patterson indeed broke off the engagement by sending his daughter away to the family estate in Virginia, though Jerome, writing to Pichon, claimed the rupture as his own act. But Elizabeth, whose will was as obstinate as her father's, put a sudden end to her own banishment and returned to Baltimore, declaring that she " would sooner be the wife of Jerome Bonaparte for an hour than the wife of any other man for life." And so the engagement was renewed.

Jerome went reluctantly to Washington to pay tardy respects to President Jefferson. Here he announced his approaching marriage and nonchalantly invited Pichon to the wedding. The French Consul-General entreated and thundered, but Jerome stood firm. Pichon, trembling for his own fate at the hands of the irate First Consul, set himself to render

the marriage impossible. He wrote to William Patterson informing him that the young man was but twenty years of age and any marriage he contracted without the consent of the head of his family would therefore be void under French law. He persuaded the Marquis d'Yrujo to dissociate himself entirely from the matter. He wrote to the French Consul at Baltimore, d'Hébecourt, to acquaint the ecclesiastical authorities with the legal position. Then, congratulating himself on his shrewd handling of a difficult situation, he wrote to Napoleon that the danger had been averted.

But Pichon did not know the obstinacy of the young man with whom he had to deal when his desires were thwarted. On October 29th Jerome obtained a licence from the Baltimore County Court, and on Christmas Eve, 1803, the marriage was celebrated in the Patterson mansion in the presence of the Mayor of Baltimore, the French Consul, and a crowd of influential townspeople. The ceremony was performed by the Right Reverend John Carroll, Bishop of Baltimore, afterwards Archbishop, and the first Primate of the Catholic Church in America. So far as the new world and the old religion were concerned, Jerome Bonaparte and Elizabeth Patterson were man and wife.

Jerome, who all his life displayed a passion for dressing up, took care to be particularly magnificent at his wedding. He wore white satin knee breeches, diamond-buckled shoes, powdered hair, and a long coat of purple satin lined with white, embellished with gold lace and embroidery, which costume was treasured by his wife until her death and handed over to the museum of Baltimore. Elizabeth herself wore very much less, since, as she herself observed, feminine dress at that period was designed more to heighten a woman's beauty than to display the dressmaker's art. Her scanty dress was of fine embroidered Indian muslin trimmed with lace and pearls. Underneath, we are told, she wore but one single garment. "All the clothes worn by the bride might have been put in my pocket," declared a shocked and horrified male guest. In



fact we gather that Jerome's bride must have looked remarkably like the much abused "modern" girl of to-day.

After a honeymoon passed at "Homestead," the Patterson estate, the young couple set out for a visit to Washington, where they were entertained by General Turreau, the French Ambassador; then they went on a long tour, which was one triumphal progress of gaiety and amusement. The necessary money had been found by the furious and disgruntled Pichon.

But though he had consented to the match, William Patterson had been under no illusion as to what the ending of the romance might be. There had been anonymous letters, which Elizabeth had treated with lofty scorn, warning the American merchant that when "Captain Bonaparte" returned to France he would be the first "to turn your daughter off and laugh at her credulity." Patterson, however, had taken care that a very definite marriage contract should be drawn up under which Jerome engaged, should any difficulty arise as to the validity of the marriage, "to execute any deed necessary to remove the difficulty, and to confer on the said union all the character of a valid and perfect marriage, according to the respective laws of the State of Maryland and of the French Republic." Further, "that if the marriage should be annulled, either on demand of the said Jerome Bonaparte or that of any member of his family, the said Elizabeth Patterson shall have a right in any case to one-third of the real, personal and mixed property of her future husband." Almost from the first it was obvious that Patterson had grounds for his uneasiness.

While Jerome had been absent in the United States, events had been happening in France where, in Victor Hugo's words, "*Rome remplaçait Sparte.*" The First Consul was in process of transformation into the Emperor, and his dynastic ambition, at last given full rein, was already ruthlessly tracing a horoscope for every member of his family. His brothers, he intended, should be princes of the Empire and in the line of succession should his own issue fail. Presently kingdoms



would be found for all of them. It was hardly likely that the man of iron and blood would consent to have his ambitions thwarted by Jerome's infatuated obstinacy. "I would see all my family at the cannon's mouth before I would modify the slightest of my plans," he had boasted when the rumour had reached him of Jerome's reported capture by the English. Lucien Bonaparte had already incurred his wrath by a love match with a stockbroker's widow. There was likely to be scant mercy for the American bride. Napoleon, made aware of what had occurred by the frightened Pichon, exploded with rage. Immediately he ordered that the union, which he declared emphatically to be null, should in no way be regularised by recognition on a French register by any official of the Empire.

Elizabeth's father saw that the situation was serious and decided to send his son Robert as an ambassador to Paris. Already he had written to the American Minister in Paris, the Hon. Robert R. Livingston, laying all the facts before him, together with letters from the President of the United States and the Secretary of State at Washington, begging him to use all his influence with the Emperor to recognise the marriage. But there was no success to report when young Patterson arrived in Paris in March, 1804. Armed with useful introductions, he had no difficulty in interviewing Lucien Bonaparte, with a young American friend, Captain Paul Bentalou, to act as interpreter. Lucien, the only member of the Bonaparte family able to stand up against the hectoring despot, received his brother-in-law with kindness and great civility. "My mother, myself and the whole family," he declared . . . "highly approve of the match. The Consul, it is true, does not for the present concur with us, but he is to be considered as isolated by the family. Placed on the lofty ground on which he stands as the first magistrate of a great and powerful nation, all his actions and ideas are directed by a policy with which we have nothing to do. We still remain plain citizens, and as such, from all we have learned of the young lady's

character and the respectability of her friends, we feel highly gratified with the connection. . . . Our present earnest wish is that Jerome may remain where he now is, and take the proper steps to become as soon as possible a citizen of the United States. . . . He must positively change his mode of living, and must not, as he had hitherto done, act the part of a prince of the royal blood ; must not think himself anything more than he really is, and must strive as much as possible to assimilate himself to the plain and uncorrupted manners of your incomparable nation, of which we shall all rejoice to see him a worthy member."

Jerome's brother went on to say that the family would provide revenues for the youngest brother that would put him "on an equal footing with your most respectable citizens, but never beyond any of them." The sum suggested was twenty thousand dollars, with the addition of a town and country residence.

Thus Lucien, who had better cause than anybody to understand Napoleon's disposition, blessed the match, but did in fact hold out no hope that Elizabeth would ever hold the position which it was her firm ambition to realise. Robert, however, got the idea that "if Jerome acted the part of an honourable man, all would go right." He was insistent, however, that Elizabeth must try and attach her husband's affections more firmly than ever, and that she must, at all costs, accompany him to France should he disregard Lucien's advice and return to his own country. Robert had learnt something of Jerome's reputation in Paris

Certainly the prospect of becoming a simple American citizen did not in the least appeal to the vainglorious and selfish young Bonaparte, who loved to strut in his brother's reflected glory and was ambitious of one day sharing it himself. All his life, as his brother had hinted, he had acted as though he stood on the steps of a throne. And already, in his brief stay in America, he had piled up debts which amounted to much more than his first year's proposed income; Besides,

so many faults and disobediences had already been condoned by his indulgent elder brother that Jerome could not seriously believe that this time he had stumbled upon the unforgivable sin. And the sight of Elizabeth's sparkling beauty would be enough to soften even Napoleon's heart, who up to now had made no definite pronouncement of his anger.

But sharply and decisively the offended god now spoke. No more money was to be advanced to Citizen Jerome. The young lieutenant received stern, uncompromising orders to return to France by the first French frigate putting in at any port of the United States. At the same time the captains of all French vessels were expressly forbidden to take on board "the young person with whom Citizen Jerome has connected himself," it being the First Consul's intention "that she shall by no means come into France, and his will that, should she arrive, she be not suffered to land, but be sent immediately back to the United States." At the same time Décrés, the French Minister of Marine, himself, wrote to Jerome, reproaching him mildly with remaining so far away in peace and luxury while France was still at war, and repeating the declarations which Napoleon had made to himself personally as to his brother's conduct. "I will receive Jerome if he leaves the young person in America and comes home to associate himself with my fortunes. . . . If he comes alone I will forgive the error of a moment and the fault of youth."

Lucien Bonaparte, Décrés reminded the young man, was in exile because of his second marriage. Following on these arguments came word of the decree of the 11th. Ventôse, which prohibited all civil officers of the Empire from receiving the transcription of the act of celebration of Jerome's "pretended marriage . . . contracted while a minor, without his mother's consent, and without previous publication in the place of his birth." It may be added that Napoleon himself had omitted to obtain his mother's consent at the time of his own marriage with Josephine Beauharnais.

It was a sobering douche in the midst of the gaieties of



New York. Jerome was, after all, a Frenchman and an officer. However much he shirked it, his brother's ukase must be obeyed, his brother's anger faced. Elizabeth and her family, remembering Robert's warning, determined that he should not go to Europe alone. In June there anchored in the Hudson the *Didon*, the best and fastest ship in the French navy. The American newspapers buzzed with conflicting rumours of the departure of Lieutenant Bonaparte and his lady. There were British warships waiting for them outside territorial waters. Would Jerome chance it? He did not care for the prospect and carried off his wife for a tour of the eastern States. By August 20th they were back in New York. Jerome's conscience was awakening, doubtless stimulated by the financial blockade. The *Didon* was still there. At an entertainment on board the French officers addressed him as "Imperial Highness." Greedily Jerome drank in the music of a title to which he had no claim—as yet! But if he returned and made peace with his brother . . . ?

Abruptly he made up his mind. He would return on the *Didon*, while his wife would be taken to France in the suite of General Armstrong, the newly-appointed Ambassador. In that way there would be no trouble over her landing. But the young people arrived late at the docks. The Ambassador's boat had sailed. A little alarmed, Jerome now chartered a brig, since Elizabeth might not set foot on the frigate. Secretly the *Philadelphia* sailed, with the young couple and Elizabeth's aunt, Miss Spear, on board. Disaster pursued them. The brig ran aground on a sandbank in the Delaware, and they were obliged to seek the shore in a small boat, Elizabeth wet through from having fallen into the river. They found refuge in a pilot's cottage and a meal of roast goose soon restored the spirits of the intrepid young wife. She was denounced by her aunt as an "irreligious little wretch," because she preferred to satisfy her hunger before returning thanks to God for her rescue. Jerome had lost seven thousand dollars in the adventure and recourse had once more to be had to Pichon



before they could even be returned to Baltimore. The arrival of the French warship *President* at Annapolis offered another chance of return. In flat defiance of the Emperor's orders, Elizabeth was taken on board, when once more the arrival of a British man-o'-war struck fear into the heart of one or other of the pair. They disembarked.

The American newspapers were hugely diverted over this new fiasco, and Jerome began to feel that he was becoming supremely ridiculous. It was now or never. The long-suffering French Minister curtly refused help in the matter of chartering another vessel, so at length the cautious William Patterson consented to fit out one of his own fast-sailing clippers, the *Erin*, for the journey. On March 3rd, 1805, the comedy of months at last came to an end, and the *Erin* set sail in secret. William Patterson, another brother, accompanied the pair, together with the secretary, Le Camus, and Dr. Garnier, who had accompanied Jerome from the *Epervier*. Madame Bonaparte was expecting the birth of a child before long. This time the voyage was uneventful except for Elizabeth's seasickness, an affliction which Jerome supported cheerfully enough. "Seasick never has killed nobody," he wrote to his father-in-law, proud of his English. In a month's time they lay before Lisbon, and Elizabeth got her first impression of the power which she so light-heartedly challenged.

The *Erin* was at once surrounded by a French guard. Jerome went ashore to ask for passports. He was offered one for himself. There was none for his lady. Napoleon's Consul-General accompanied him back on board. "What can I do for Miss Patterson?" he inquired suavely, to which Elizabeth heatedly replied, "Tell your master that Madame Bonaparte is ambitious and demands her rights as a member of the Imperial family." Serrurier was regretful but firm. Miss Patterson would not be permitted to land in Spain, Portugal or Holland any more than in France.

It was hardly likely that Jerome would consent to return to America without making an appeal to the brother whom he

had come across the ocean to see. Orders were waiting for him to travel at once to Milan by a route carefully mapped out for him, from which he must not deviate under threat of arrest and imprisonment. Napoleon seems to have been a little afraid that his scapegrace brother would not take his threats quite seriously, for we find him at this time writing to Madame Mère urging her to add her entreaties to his own. He will accord the prodigal one interview, but, if he remains impenitent, he means to treat him with the utmost severity, even to the point of making him an example to other young officers tempted to desert their duty and their honour for a woman. "Write to him taking it for granted that he will go to Milan," he urges his mother. "Impress on him that I have been a father to him, that his duty to me is sacred, and that he has no future, no salvation, except in obeying my instructions. Tell his sisters to write to him as well; for when once I have pronounced sentence, I shall be unyielding and his life will be blasted for ever."

But back in the old world, with the signs of Napoleon's daily increasing power all about him, Jerome was not inclined to flat disobedience. A formal submission had always enabled him to get his own way. All his life he had thwarted and disobeyed his elder brother, but bluff, audacity and assumed repentance had always won him indulgence. Gaily, therefore, he disembarked, bidding his wife an affectionate farewell. We can imagine that Elizabeth had qualms on seeing him depart, though she was far from believing then that he was capable of deserting her. There was no suspicion in Jerome's own mind at the time that he had spoken his last word to her, or that only once again would he ever look upon her face. He set off across Spain, and near Merida, in Estremadura, encountered an old friend, General Junot, who was travelling to Portugal as Ambassador. Madame Junot, in her memoirs, has left her impressions of the young man :

"We invited him to luncheon. I was struck by a great change in his bearing. He seemed responsible, almost serious.

His expression, that used to be so gay and frivolous, had changed to a wistful sadness which changed him so much that I hardly recognised him. He talked astonishingly well about the customs, habits and people of the United States. Junot, who has known him from childhood, talked to him almost like a father, urging him not to thwart the Emperor." Jerome replied that he was bound by honour, and that, having the consent of his mother and eldest brother, there was only one course for him to take. It is reassuring to know that for one moment in his career at least, the youngest Bonaparte felt himself constrained by honour to a course that would bring him material loss. The sentiment was short-lived and would certainly have evaporated sooner if he had not been still very much in love with Elizabeth. The point about the consent of his mother and brother was a quibble, having been given, after the event in a letter of Joseph's, as dependent on that of the First Consul. But even at this point we do not find Jerome declaring unequivocally as his brother Lucien had done, that come what might, he would never desert his wife. He is still convinced of Napoleon's ultimate capitulation. "My brother will listen to me," he told Junot and his wife. "He is good, he is just. Admitting that I committed a fault in marrying Miss Patterson without his consent, must punishment strike now? And on whose head will it fall? On that of my poor innocent wife! No, no, my brother cannot wish to place such a vile stigma on one of the most respectable families in the United States, or to deal a mortal blow at a girl as good as she is beautiful."

He showed them a gold-framed miniature of his wife. "I saw a ravishing face," writes the General's wife, "and a peculiarity which struck me at once and Junot as well, was the resemblance between Miss Patterson and the Princess Borghese. . . . But I find the expression of Madame Jerome Bonaparte has much more fire and animation." Jerome put away the charming picture with a flourish. "Judge then," he cried dramatically, "if it is possible to abandon a person



like her you have seen, when to such a beautiful face she adds all the qualities that make a woman loved. If only my brother would consent to see her, to listen to her for a single moment, I am sure that her triumph would be certain. . . . I am quite determined not to yield. Strong in the justice of my cause, I will do no act of which later I may repent."

Brave words! General Junot was impressed. His wife, in spite of her affection for the young man, knew him well enough to be doubtful. Jerome might quote Lucien's first marriage with Christine Boyer, whom Napoleon first frowned upon but later took into favour. But Lucien's second marriage was not forgiven. Nor was Jerome the same person as his brother. And certainly the great Emperor was by no means the same person as Citizen Napoleon Bonaparte.

And this Jerome was to learn for himself when, on his arrival at Turin on April 24th, he found that his brother was at Alessandria. He wrote for an interview. The reply was curt. There could be no interview until the young man was pledged to obedience. Unconditional surrender was demanded. After eleven days it was conceded. In so short a time had the imperial spell done its work. In less than a month from his meeting with Junot, Jerome was eating his own brave words. His wife, his honour, his unborn son alike were sacrificed to the Emperor's favour. No doubt the young man flattered himself that he had put up an excellent fight.

Having gained his point, Napoleon was pleased to be magnanimous. "There is no fault," he wrote pontifically, "which a sincere repentance will not wash out. Your union with Miss Patterson is void in the eyes of religion as in the eye of the law. Write Miss Patterson to return to America. I will grant her a life pension of 60,000 francs, on condition that in no case shall she use my name, to which, since her marriage is null, she has no right. Make her understand that you have no power, now or in the future, to alter the course of events. Your marriage being thus annulled of your own free will, I will bestow my favour on you once again and call



back the love I had for you since your childhood. I hope that you will prove yourself worthy of it by taking pains to earn my approval and to distinguish yourself in my armies."

Jerome promised everything. An interview took place. After some home truths from the Emperor, the brothers were reconciled. Jerome left the imperial presence heartbroken at the sacrifice which had been forced upon him, and shaken by the realisation of how near he had come to losing altogether the dazzling future which he had been allowed to glimpse. He had the promise of solid consolations. His brother would once more pay his debts, promised to allow him an income of 150,000 francs a year and restore him to a naval command.

Le Camus was dispatched to break the news to the young wife who was so anxiously awaiting her husband's return. Jerome, incapable of loyalty in any direction, wrote her that his submission was only temporary and dictated by policy. He would never desert her and things would come all right. The *Erin* had left the Tagus for Amsterdam, but even here the unhappy Elizabeth had been refused permission to land by the Grand Pensionary of the Batavian Republic, who was but a puppet of the Emperor. For eight days the *Erin* had remained virtually a prisoner in the Texel Roads, guarded by a gunboat and a frigate, forbidden to communicate with the shore, or even to take in provisions. The date of Elizabeth's confinement was approaching, and she decided to yield to necessity and sail for England. After representations from the American Minister the *Erin* was at length allowed to sail, and Madame Bonaparte reached Dover on May 19th. Owing to Napoleon's persecution she had become something of a celebrity, and so great was the excitement over her arrival that Pitt, the Prime Minister, thought it necessary to send a military guard to protect her, on disembarking, from the cheering multitudes. From Dover she went direct to London in a post-chaise, and a house was taken for her at Camberwell, then a village two miles from London. Here she received Le Camus with his unwelcome news, and a message of undying

fidelity from her husband. Jerome even now was unable to believe that he could not have both the Emperor's favour and the woman he loved. On July 7th, 1805, her son was born, and baptized Jerome Napoleon Bonaparte, after the father who had deserted him and the uncle who had declared him illegitimate. With a view to future claims, Elizabeth and her brother, who still remained with her, had the birth registered by a notary, and the certificate countersigned by the Ambassadors of Prussia and Austria then in London. Five weeks later she wrote to her father discussing her plans. She would not return to America, for that would look like capitulation, but she would stay in London in the strictest seclusion. "We imagine," she wrote, "that Bonaparte is in some measure a prisoner and we must wait patiently to know how he will act; in the meantime it would be extremely imprudent for me to go out or see anyone, and I must avoid getting into any scrapes which I might be led into from thinking that he would desert me. No matter what I think, it is unjust to condemn until we have some certainty greater than at present, and my conduct shall be such as if I had a perfect reliance on him."

Elizabeth's stay in England amongst his enemies roused Napoleon to bitter anger against her. He forced Jerome to write entreating her to return to her father's home. In accordance with her intention of acting as though she still believed in her husband, Elizabeth set sail for America in November. It was a bitter humiliation to the woman who had aspired to shine in the courts of Europe. "The Emperor," she wrote bitterly at a later date, "hurled me back on what I hated most on earth—my Baltimore obscurity." Yet in spite of his treatment of her she had a keen admiration for Napoleon, with whom she felt herself curiously akin. Had another than herself been the victim she would certainly have ranged herself on the Emperor's side. She consented now to accept the 60,000 francs which he had offered her, though she disregarded from the first his condition that she

must not use the name of Bonaparte. Defiantly even on her receipts for his money she used the name. Her husband still wrote to her in terms of passionate affection protesting that he would never forget that he was "the father of Jerome Napoleon and the husband of Elise." No doubt he was still sincere, for in spite of his submission he was still, as late as May, 1806, importuning his brother to recognise the marriage.

But the Emperor had now determined to put an end once and for ever to the claims of the American girl. On May 24th, therefore, he addressed to Pope Pius VII a peremptory request that the marriage should be declared null and void. The request was accompanied by the gift of a magnificent gold tiara set with diamonds and rubies. Cardinal Fesch was charged to deliver the letter. "I have often spoken to your Holiness," runs a portion of the epistle, "of a young brother, nineteen years of age, whom I sent in a frigate to America, and who, after a month's stay, although still a minor, married a Protestant, the daughter of a United States merchant. He has now returned, penitent, and I have sent back to America Miss Patterson, who calls herself his wife. Though a Spanish priest so far forgot his duty as to bless the union, by our laws the marriage is null and void. I desire from your Holiness a bull annulling the marriage, and send herewith some documents, including a statement by Cardinal Caselli, which will give your Holiness all needful information. I could have this marriage annulled in Paris, for the Gallican Church holds such unions invalid; but I prefer to obtain a decree direct from the Court of Rome, if only as a warning to reigning families who may contemplate a Protestant alliance. It is my wish that the matter shall be arranged as quietly as possible, and when your Holiness advises me that you have taken the necessary steps, I will get the marriage annulled here by a civil tribunal. It is against the best interests of France for this Protestant woman to enter my family. And it is a dangerous precedent to allow a young man under age and so highly placed to trample upon the laws of his country."





Elizabeth Patterson, Wife of Jerome Bonaparte.  
*After Gilbert Stuart.*





Napoleon, it will be seen, was not above making deliberate mis-statements, since it was well known to him that his brother's marriage had been performed, not by an unknown Spanish priest, but by the highest Catholic functionary in the United States.

But the great Emperor found the Vatican as obstinate as Henry VIII of England had found it some centuries before. Pius VII was neither to be bribed nor threatened. He gave the matter his closest personal attention, but though his reply was courteous and conciliatory, it was a flat refusal. Among the reasons put forward there was not one which would justify him in declaring the marriage void. The rupture thus started with Napoleon was never healed. Elizabeth Patterson of Baltimore had started the train of events which was to lead Pope Pius into captivity at Fontainebleau. But Napoleon, as he had hinted in his letter, had other instruments, more docile, close at hand. In October of the following year, the marriage was formally declared null by a civil tribunal in Paris.

It was futile after this for Jerome to go on protesting his undying loyalty to his American wife. His letters grew colder and less frequent, while his interest began to pass from Elizabeth to his son. He was occupied with mistresses and his own rapidly advancing worldly fortunes. Napoleon, true to his promise, gave his young brother such rapid promotion that he found himself a Rear-Admiral at the age of twenty-two. In 1806, by decree of the Senate, he became a Prince of the Blood and was included in the line of succession. One day a kingdom would be found for him. But a king, Napoleon considered, must have military glory to gild his throne. Jerome therefore left the Navy for the Army, followed his brother's fortunes in Bavaria, Silesia and Poland, and became a general with equal rapidity, and lack of distinction, which latter, it must be admitted, was not entirely his own fault, for Jerome was not lacking in physical courage.

It was Napoleon's reasoned policy to settle members of

his family on all the thrones of Europe. His brother Joseph was by this time King of Naples, and Louis was on the throne of Holland. Only Lucien, who had refused to give up his bourgeoisie wife, was in exile. To provide for Jerome, a new kingdom was now carved out of the territories of Brunswick, Prussia, Hesse-Cassel and Hanover. On the day of the signature of the peace treaty of Tilsit, in 1807, the youngest Bonaparte became King of Westphalia, as the final reward for his perfidy. To consolidate his position, a bride was found for him, the Protestant Princess Catherine Fredericka of Wurtemberg. She was stupid but amiable, and loved Jerome all her life with a tender devotion, despite the constant procession of mistresses who passed through his life and court. She bore him three children. But even in the midst of his licentious and spendthrift court at Cassel, the King of Westphalia could not entirely forget his first-born son nor the woman to whom he had sworn undying fidelity. He must often have reflected how much better Elizabeth's beauty, regal bearing and polished wit would have become a throne than the comfortable, homely, plump little Princess who was his consort. But it was above all his son he wanted. In the spring of the year following his second marriage, Auguste Le Camus, the brother of the Creole secretary whom he had ennobled and made his Foreign Minister, was sent on a secret mission to the United States. He carried letters to Elizabeth and her father, requesting them to send her son Jerome Napoleon, then four years old, to Europe, in the care of Le Camus, so that he might be educated as befitted his rank and the position which, it was hinted, he might one day expect to occupy. Elizabeth was urged to make this one further sacrifice for the sake of her son.

It is not surprising that the request was curtly refused. Elizabeth wrote back giving the King of Westphalia to understand that his help and countenance were not required for their son. She was in communication with the Emperor himself through General Turreau, the French Ambassador in

the United States, and was ready to do anything that Napoleon thought best if he would allow her to go to France and would give her a title and the means of supporting it. Already, she wrote, she had refused the invitation of Sir Sidney Smith to go to London, as she knew that such a step would be disagreeable to the Emperor.

To this communication Jerome replied reproachfully. Since he was in no position to forbid the appeal to Napoleon, he tried to work on the maternal fears of his discarded wife, by suggesting that the boy's life would be unsafe among people to whom his death would be more useful than his life. He personally would lose kingdom and life itself rather than take that risk for his son. He suggested that Elizabeth herself should accompany the boy to Westphalia, where he would instal her as Princess of Smalkalden with a revenue of two hundred thousand francs. He still protested his devotion, which he declared was hers for life.

This amazing suggestion brought from his first wife the sharp retort that the Kingdom of Westphalia might be big, but it was not big enough for two queens. Moreover she preferred "being sheltered under an eagle's wing rather than hanging from the bill of a goose," a contemptuous comparison that kept Jerome silent for three years. Then, moved by some further impulse of interest in his son, he once more wrote asking news. "Be assured that all will come right sooner or later," he told her and added that she would never find a more tender friend than himself. This time Elizabeth vouchsafed no reply. We can assume that her last vestige of tenderness for the husband who had treated her so contemptibly had vanished, though she cherished the belief to the end of her life that he had cared for her more than he had ever cared for any other woman.

For seven years Elizabeth folded the wings of her ambition and remained quietly at Baltimore among the people whom she despised so heartily. On the downfall of the King of Westphalia she prudently obtained a regular divorce, by



special Act of the Legislature of Maryland to protect her small fortune in case his chronic need for money should drive him back to her. At the same time she ceased to use the name of Bonaparte. The general break-up after Waterloo brought her back to England, where she was fêted and made much of. In Europe she felt that she lived, in America she only vegetated. Her letters to her father are full of her social triumphs and of comparisons between the life of the two continents, much to the disadvantage of America. Particularly was she struck by the different position of her own sex in society. "Here women of forty and even fifty are more cherished and as advantageously married as chits of sixteen. They are not here cheated out of their youth, as with us, but retain the glorious privilege of charming until at least sixty." In Paris, whither she went in the winter after the battle of Waterloo, her success was even greater. Louis XVIII expressed his wish to see her at his court, an invitation which she refused on the grounds that, having received a pension from Napoleon, she could not take favours from his supplanter. It is curious that all her life she bore the Emperor no malice for his treatment of her. Her own ambitious nature was indeed close kin to his own. In Paris she counted amongst her fervent admirers the Duke of Wellington, Talleyrand and Madame de Stael. In the most brilliant society in the world the Baltimore merchant's daughter much more than held her own. In 1819 she decided to bring over her son to educate him upon the European model.

Whatever may have been the defects of Elizabeth Patterson's own education at which Pichon had sneered, she displayed excellent judgment and the shrewdest sense in directing that of her son. Time and again in her letters she emphasises the duty of parents to give their children every educational advantage. "My wish," she wrote to her father, who thoroughly disapproved of her quitting America, "is to educate him with the idea that he has his fortune to acquire by his own exertions, but at the same time to profit by all the good

intentions of his relations in a way that will not interfere with his attainment of personal distinction, which after all is better than money, and which will always command it." And again she wrote : " The only certain fortune parents can give their children is some lucrative and respectable profession, such as the law."

Geneva was settled upon as the place of the boy's school. The curriculum embraced Latin, a smattering of Greek, mathematics, English and French, which was to be followed up by a course in chemistry and physics, before he embarked upon his legal studies. To these main subjects were added history, mythology, geography, drawing, fencing, riding, dancing, politeness and the *usage de monde*—a general education which could hardly be bettered at the present day. Young Jerome Napoleon applied himself to his studies and made excellent progress. His mother, whose fortune amounted only to what she had been able to save out of her allowance of sixty thousand francs, which had, of course, ceased with the Emperor's downfall, lived on the simplest and most economical scale at Geneva. Living was expensive—the Swiss determined to extract the last penny from the foreigners who had descended in great numbers upon their country. Nothing, she lamented, had any definite price, but varied according to the visitor's nationality and estimated means. The English had spoiled everything, doubling prices against the American visitor of moderate means—a complaint which reads quaintly to-day. But though her straitened means were forcing her into an economy that verged on parsimony, it is greatly to Elizabeth's credit that she spent generously upon her son, whose education cost her one thousand francs yearly. Her poor style of living, moreover, in no way affected her social position. She was made much of by the most brilliant and exclusive society of princes, peeresses, philosophers and poets who had made the lake-side town their home, a society which for culture and brilliance was hardly second even to Paris.

It was at this period that Madame Bonaparte became

acquainted with her husband's family, whom she summed up shrewdly and with characteristic insight. None of them, she concluded, was as wealthy as they were reputed to be; all were extravagant and lived beyond their incomes, were given to making promises which they had no intention of keeping. All that is, except Madame Mère, for whose thrift, simplicity and force of character she conceived considerable respect. She quickly realised that her son had nothing to expect from them. But the young Jerome Napoleon made an excellent impression upon them all. He was tall, handsome, well-bred and unassuming, with considerable gifts of intellect and character. The Princess Borghese, having no children of her own, expressed her desire, through Mr. John Jacob Astor, to have the boy to live with her and make him her heir. Elizabeth had no illusions as to the value of this offer, which she did not even communicate to her son, but she accepted an invitation from the Princess to visit her in Rome. At this family gathering the idea of a marriage between the young Jerome Napoleon and his cousin Mathilde, the daughter of Joseph, ex-King of Naples and Spain, was mooted and enthusiastically received by both sides of the family. The ex-King of Westphalia wrote approving the scheme, the boy himself apparently acquiesced in the wishes of his elders, though he had found the society of princes and princesses a little boring and hankered after the solid comforts of his grandfather's mansion in Baltimore.

Joseph Bonaparte was living with his family in America under the name of Count de Survilliers, having managed to transport his large fortune safely beyond the seas. The idea of the marriage was approved by him, though Elizabeth was explicit that her son could bring no money into the contract. In 1822 Jerome was sent back to America to gain his cousin's approval, his mother meanwhile writing scores of anxious letters to old William Patterson, urging him to keep a sharp eye on the marriage contract and to see that at least half the 100,000 dollars which the Count was expected to provide as



dowry should be settled on her son personally. For the time being Elizabeth elected to remain behind in Europe on the plea of ill-health. She moved to Florence, still deploring the high cost of living, and here one day, in a gallery of the Pitti Palace, she came face to face with her son's father. They did not speak. Both thought no doubt of that tender and passionate farewell on board the *Erin* before Lisbon. Jerome had his German consort on his arm. Whispering to her in agitation, "That is my American wife!" he drew her swiftly away. It was the last time they were ever to set eyes upon each other.

Their son meantime had made a favourable impression upon his uncle, but must have suffered a shock when he met the girl, who is described as "in size a dwarf and excessively ugly." The match was dropped, much to the chagrin of his mother. Jerome went to complete his studies at Harvard. Elizabeth's letters at this period are full of complaints of his extravagance, though his father was actually paying her 1,200 dollars a year on his account. She was tortured by the fear that he would marry some penniless girl, and wrote constantly to her father to implore him to "discourage all that tendency to romance and absurd falling in love which has been the ruin of your family." For herself, she had rejected many chances of marrying advantageously, because, having once been married to the brother of an Emperor, she felt that she could not endure as a husband anyone of lesser rank. For her son she was equally ambitious, and began to make new plans for a match with the daughter of the Princess Baciocchi, another Bonaparte sister. But the young Jerome was tired of having his life arranged for him. After graduating at Harvard in 1826 he joined his mother once again in Europe and for the first time met his father, who greeted him with affection. The ex-Queen Catherine and his half-brothers and sister treated him quite as one of the family; but he was shrewd enough to see that none of his royal relatives could do anything for him. At his own wish he returned to America, and three years later married a Baltimore girl, Mary Williams, whose family



hailed from Massachusetts. His mother was as bitter against this marriage as ever the Emperor Napoleon had been against her own. It was some palliation that the girl was rich, but all the same a breach was opened between mother and son that was never quite healed. Elizabeth immediately ceased to make him any allowance and correspondingly increased her own scale of living. Vindictively she expressed the hope that her daughter-in-law would have no children. But Jerome's Bonaparte relations all sent congratulations, his father urging him, as twenty years earlier he had himself been urged by his family, to become an American citizen. His cousin, the dwarfish Mathilde, wrote affectionate wishes for his happiness. Elizabeth's amiable wish was not fulfilled. Two sons were born to young Jerome and his wife, of whom the elder bore his father's names of Jerome Napoleon and the younger was christened Charles Joseph.

In 1835 William Patterson died, leaving in his will a peevish denunciation of the conduct of his eldest daughter, and discriminating against her in the division of his property. He left her, out of his huge estate, only a few small houses, which, however, thanks to the rapid growth of Baltimore and consequent increase in ground values, rapidly became of great value, and shrewdly handled, provided her before her death with a handsome fortune.

It seemed as though the consequences of the marriage of Elizabeth Patterson and Prince Jerome had at last worked themselves out, when the revolution in France in 1848 gave another turn to Fortune's wheel. The election of Louis Napoleon, first as President and later as Emperor, brought the American woman back post-haste to Europe. The younger Jerome had met his cousin, now Napoleon III, during his visit to Europe in 1826, and had maintained the most cordial relations with him ever since. Immediately upon the restoration of the Empire, Elizabeth's son, now a prosperous lawyer in Baltimore, had sent over to France a complete *dossier* of his parents' marriage. This he followed by a personal visit

to Paris in 1854, when he was warmly received by the Emperor and invited to St. Cloud, where he was informed that a trial of his case had been granted and a report prepared by the Minister of Justice, the President of the Senate, and the President of the Council of State. This report the Emperor pressed into his cousin's hand. It declared that M. Jerome Bonaparte had the right to be regarded in France as of legitimate birth ; that he was a Frenchman by birth, and if he had resigned his nationality, it might be restored to him under Article 18 of the Civil Code. A few days later Napoleon III signed a decree giving all the rights of French subjects to Jerome Bonaparte of Baltimore and his two sons, Jerome and Charles.

But perhaps the Emperor had not realised quite how far-reaching the effects of this declaration might be. He himself at this period had no son, and next to him in the line of succession stood the ex-King of Westphalia and his son of his second marriage, Prince Napoleon. If Elizabeth Patterson's son was legitimate, as the elder, he would become heir to the Empire before his half-brother. His father, now occupying a handsome position as Governor of the Invalides, came forward to protest that the new decree made the legitimacy of his other children doubtful in the eyes of the French people. He declared it to be an attack on his honour and that of his brother the Emperor, since it annulled the solemn engagements entered into with the King of Wurtemberg and the Emperor of Russia before his marriage with the Princess Catherine. The Emperor tried to effect a compromise, offering the title of Duc de Sartène, with the grant of an estate in France with succession to his son (now an officer in the French Dragoons) if Jerome of Baltimore would formally renounce all his claims. The offer was refused. His half brother and sister therefore took a joint petition to the French Courts to forbid the use of the name of Bonaparte to the American branch of the family. Judgment secured to the defendant the right to the use of the name " by which he had always been known," but declared that the question of his legitimacy was left open,

thus annulling the previous decree signed by the Emperor. Elizabeth's son, finally repudiated by his father, retired again to America.

Since the restoration, old Prince Jerome, once again a Prince of the Blood, had been leading the old life of extravagance, folly and vice, with a handsome income once more provided by the State. Upon Queen Catherine's death, he had married a third wife, an Italian Marchesa, spent her fortune and driven her out of doors on scandalous charges which were notoriously untrue. He was regarded in Paris with a mixture of affectionate respect, as a link with the great Napoleon and the glorious days of the First Empire, and contempt for his own personal life and character. His death at a ripe old age in 1860 was the occasion for a military funeral unsurpassed in magnificence, and he was buried at the Invalides beside the brother to whom he had played jackal. The funeral orations dwelt exclusively upon the part he had played in the Waterloo campaign. It would be difficult to find any other word to say in his favour. In spite of the solemn engagements entered into at the time of his first marriage he, left nothing to the child of that union. As he had foreseen would be the case, a suit was now begun in the French courts, by "Monsieur Jerome Napoleon Bonaparte and Madame Elizabeth Patterson, divorced wife and widow of His Imperial Highness Prince Jerome," to claim the son's legal share in the property. The great Berryer was retained as advocate. By every law of equity his case was irrefutable, but his eloquence necessarily amounted to a bitter attack on Jerome's own conduct and that of Napoleon I, and indirectly on the existing Government. Thus political feeling entered into the case, which was decided against the petitioners. Once again, in face of the disapproval of the civilised world, and in defiance of every principle of equity, the marriage between Jerome Bonaparte and Elizabeth Patterson was affirmed to be void, and their son to be illegitimate—all on the flimsy excuse that the permission of the young man's mother had not been

obtained. Jerome was declared to be entitled to no share in his father's estate.

Upon this he retired finally to America with his mother. His son, now a Colonel, resigned his commission in the French army, where he had won distinction in a number of campaigns. He had served through the Crimean War and received decorations from the Sultan of Turkey, the Queen of England and the Cross of a Knight of the Légion d'Honneur. He had seen the conquest of Algeria and served in the Italian campaign against Austria, receiving French and Italian decorations. Now he shook the dust of an ungrateful country from his feet. Later, on the downfall of Napoleon III, his grandmother put forward his claims, hoping that he might be called to the Regency, if not to the Imperial throne—claims which came, of course, to nothing. His son married in America, had a daughter, who in turn married a Danish Count, and a son still living in the United States. His younger brother, Charles Joseph, rose high in the public service, becoming in turn Secretary to the Navy and Attorney-General of the United States.

Jerome Napoleon, the son of Elizabeth Patterson, died in 1870. His mother survived him nine years. She took three days in dying, so great was her vitality, and at the age of ninety-four still retained a great measure of her good looks and some of the contours of youth, together with the brilliance and bitterness of her wit. To the end she retained her contempt for her native Baltimore, which she had seen grow from a township of four thousand people to a great city numbering four hundred thousand. Latterly she lived in the obscurity of a quiet boarding house, spending but two thousand dollars a year, the smallest fraction of her ever-increasing income, living with trunks of dresses and finery associated with her social triumphs in Europe. In her long life she had seen France, which she would have made her adopted country, pass through the throes of four revolutions, which carried her from the days of the *Ancien Régime* to the Third Republic of



the present day. On the downfall of Napoleon III she prophesied that the world had had enough of kings, a saying which reflected her own bitter disillusionment. It is certain that the American Bonapartes in the position to which they attained in their own country owed nothing to old Prince Jerome except their name, which he strained every nerve to take away from them.

## XIII

## THE EX-EMPRESS'S LOVER

THE quarrel of the French with Marie Louise is that the Princess turned out a human being after all. And since Napoleon's second wife was, historically, of importance to France alone, the world in general has been content to take her at France's valuation.\* Imbert de St-Amand assigns her "but a contemptible place in history." Max Billard is still more severe: "This woman, devoid of every virtue, unworthy of her destiny, had but one husband, the man for whom she had no affection, the man who had set her beside him on the proudest throne of the universe, whose colossal personality is still visible in the world of to-day, and without whom her name would have been unrecorded by history."

This is as unfair a verdict as has ever been pronounced on any human being. So far from being devoid of every virtue, Marie Louise possessed to an eminent degree that kindness and compassion which is the greatest of all virtues and the fountain of all the others. As a sovereign, she was averse, like William the Conqueror, from taking life in cold blood. She loved to pardon. "She was fond of animal life," admits Billard, not aware that he is saying much to her credit, "was devoted to doves, hares and lambs, of which she made pets. She had also a particular fancy for frogs. In one of her letters, she tells us how she very nearly caught a frog, green as a

---

\* Mrs. Cuthell, in a recent book, takes a sympathetic view of her.

pistachio nut, and how at the critical moment it escaped. She received one day a present of four frogs. 'I have given two,' she writes, 'to my sister, and have kept the others for myself. They are lovely!'"

I, for one, can't help liking a woman with traits like that.

As to her destiny, it was not one which she desired or sought. Bonaparte, she had been taught to regard as the deadliest enemy of her house, as the foe of all the ideals which she cherished. She was the captive of his bow and spear, the virgin tribute exacted by the conqueror from the conquered. "Pray for me that this may not come to pass," she wrote to a friend when there was talk of the marriage. When it did come to pass in April, 1810, she spoke of herself truly, as the victim thrown to the Minotaur.

If she had persisted in her aversion, she might have been less harshly judged. But she was only nineteen when she became a wife, and was betrayed by her amorous temperament into something like love for the imperial egotist. The girl had romantic ideals. In her diary of a progress down the Rhine, she relates the legend of Roland and Hildegard with sympathetic gusto, concluding, "that is how women still love, but men no longer." Napoleon, a snob to the very core, regarded the daughter of a hundred kings with awe and delighted pride. But he was incapable of feeling, or inspiring anyone with, real love. When the crash came, Marie Louise left him to go to Elba, while she took the road to Vienna.

Her place was with her husband, say the sententious biographers. The husband had not set a good example of conjugal fidelity by his treatment of Josephine. Marie Louise knew that he had wanted her to fulfil a dynastic purpose. Well, she had given him the son he desired, but the dynastic purpose had come to naught. He had bound her, the most glittering of his captives, to his triumphal car, the wheels of which had rolled over her country and her kinsfolk; she could hardly be expected to let herself be hurled by that car into the abyss. Besides, by following her husband, she would



Empress Marie Louise.





have abandoned their son and left him entirely to the mercy of his father's enemies.

I confess that I can only marvel at the dog-like fidelity of the few who did accompany the fallen emperor into exile. Utterly incapable of a disinterested action or an unselfish thought, he deserved no affection from anyone. He used everyone with whom he came in touch to promote his own aggrandisement. Even a satellite may be excused for flying off on an orbit of its own when its primary is extinguished. Marie Louise was one of those unfortunate human beings who are weighed down by the prestige of another—sometimes it is a husband, sometimes a father, sometimes a brother. Such people have, all the same, personalities and desires of their own, though the world thinks they should be entirely content with reflected glory. Had the King of Rome lived, his life would have been made wretched by the Napoleonic legend. How many, I wonder, of those who condemn the Empress would have shot themselves or cut their throats upon the crowning catastrophe of Waterloo? Napoleon himself did not—there was an end of Emperor and Empire, but he thought it well worth while to go on living as General Bonaparte.

Whatever spell he may have cast upon her when he was there in the flesh, his downfall, Marie Louise must have realised, meant the release of her own personality. She was only twenty-three. Her whole life was practically before her, What would she do with it? Metternich, at Vienna, must have given a good deal of thought to the matter. She might care nothing for her husband, but for that very reason she might devote herself to the cause of her son. In August, 1814, the Archduchess, as she was once more called, was at Aix-les-Bains, flirting outrageously, it was reported, with French officers. An entanglement with one of the *demi-soldes*, some ardent young veteran of Austerlitz and Jena, might prove troublesome. The Austrian court despatched an envoy to Aix with perhaps no other definite mission than to keep off Bonapartist intriguers.

The envoy selected was Lieutenant-Field-Marshal Count Albert-Adam von Neipperg, an officer who had served with distinction in all the wars since Jemmappes and had also won his spurs in the fields of diplomacy. It is said that a letter left behind by his dead mother assigned him a certain French noble as his father. His career was romantic, but his appearance was not. Though not bad-looking, he had been disfigured by the loss of an eye, and wore all his life a black bandage over the empty socket instead of filling it with a glass eye. Perhaps he was proud of the injury, which had been received in action. In 1814 he entered his fortieth year. He was, moreover, married.

These disadvantages notwithstanding, the Field-Marshal very soon made a deep impression on the Archduchess. It is alleged in some quarters that they were already acquainted—that Neipperg had acted as her chamberlain on the occasion of her visit to Prague two years before. But she betrayed no tender interest, but rather distrust, upon his reappearance at Aix. Within a very few days, however, she wrote to her father, “Count Neipperg is most attentive. I like his manner.”

Nine days later, on July 31st, she wrote the last letter Napoleon was to receive from her. She assured him of her affection and of her intention to join him at Elba at the earliest possible moment. The reply which he sent back by an officer of his household was intercepted by Neipperg. Not impossibly, Marie Louise was half sincere. At the beginning of September her husband received a visit from his mistress, the Countess Walewska, and their son, afterwards Minister of Foreign Affairs under the Second Empire. It is believed that this visit was reported to the Archduchess by Neipperg, and not unnaturally confirmed her in her half-formed resolution to forsake Napoleon. In a letter to the Kaiser Francis, dated September 30th, she says, “You may be sure that I was never less disposed to start on such a journey than I am now, and I give you my word of honour that I will never

go to Elba without having previously received your permission."

This letter must have been written on the way to Vienna. Having received a polite hint from Talleyrand to quit Savoy, the Archduchess had slowly made her way home through Switzerland. She travelled under the *alias* of Duchess of Colorno, taking the name from a castle in the duchy of Parma which had been assigned to her. She travelled via Lausanne, Payerne, Fribourg and Bern, visited Grindelwald and Lauterbrunnen, went on to the Lake of Lucerne, climbed the Rigi, and then pursued her journey by Zurich, Constance and Munich.

Neipperg had been her faithful companion all the time. "His influence at this time became daily more dominant, whereas that of her old counsellors, MM. de Méneval and de Bausset, correspondingly diminished. Marie Louise, who would not at first tolerate the idea of being in Vienna at the same time as the sovereigns who had brought about her husband's downfall, now became quite reconciled to the idea. The Count von Neipperg never left her, and her courage in undertaking not only fatiguing but dangerous excursions among glaciers and mountains was entirely due to the knowledge that he was beside her. In addition, he discovered himself to be a capable musician, able to entertain her and accompany her songs. No cavalier could have been more devoted, assiduous and indefatigable. Perhaps he was even then her lover; in any case he was rapidly making himself indispensable to her."

Eduard Wertheimer, the Empress's Austrian biographer, does not think he was at that time her lover. For he has found a letter from the Field-Marshal to the Kaiser, dated August 20th, asking permission to rejoin the troops at Pavia, as his mission to the Archduchess referred only to her stay at Aix; and another, dated from Bern, September 22nd, in which Neipperg solicits the appointment of Austrian Minister at Turin. That another rôle was found for him, I attribute to the agency of Marie Louise herself. She could not afford to



part with Neipperg, who acted as her ambassador to the Congress. It was he who won over Metternich and Castlereagh, and got them to defeat a scheme for depriving her of Parma. In return she had to surrender the custody of her son to her father. To her, desperately in love with the one-eyed man, the sacrifice seemed, no doubt, a light one. And when the news came that "he" had left Elba and landed in France, she told her cavalier to finish a letter to Metternich in which she declared that she was absolutely ignorant of the Emperor Napoleon's intentions and placed herself unreservedly under the protection of the Allied Powers.

At that moment she could not have done otherwise had she wished to. She and her son were practically prisoners at discretion. Her position, even considered apart from her newly-developed passion, was extraordinarily difficult. She refused to take part in the public prayers being offered up all over Austria for the final defeat of Napoleon. When Méneval, her high-minded French attendant, took leave of her to return to France, she asked him to tell the Emperor that she wished him well and hoped he would appreciate the sadness of her situation. The necessity for a separation would not, she assured him, in any way affect the feelings of esteem and gratitude she bore him. These are not the words of a heartless or insensible woman. She told Méneval that she felt that all relations between her and France were about to cease for ever, but that she would always cherish a deep affection for that country of her adoption. She gave the secretary a snuff-box with her monogram in diamonds as a keepsake, and then "hurriedly withdrew in order to hide the emotion she could no longer restrain." Throughout the fateful Hundred Days, she divided her time between Schonbrunn and Baden, dressing very elegantly, riding, and evidently enjoying her freedom. When the news of Napoleon's surrender to the English was communicated to her in writing, she wrote back: "Thank you. I had already heard the news you sent me. I want to ride to Merkenstein. Do you think the



Count Neipperg, the husband of Empress Marie Louise.



weather is sufficiently promising?" This sounds callous. But the news must, in fact, have come as an enormous relief to her. Had her husband triumphed at Waterloo he might have demanded her back. She would have found herself once more sacrificed to the expedients of statecraft. Or a victorious Emperor might have discarded her publicly, as he had discarded his former wife.

Her husband's reappearance must have been particularly vexatious to her just then, for Neipperg himself was now free. His wife died in Wurtemberg in April, 1815. With impatience the Archduchess awaited his return from Italy, whither he had gone to combat Murat. They exchanged long letters, and displayed a lover-like anxiety in the intervals. "The General has not given me signs of life for the last eighteen days," laments Marie Louise in a letter to a confidante; on which Max Billard unctuously comments, "Eighteen days seemed a century to the forgetful wife, who had long since given up writing to her husband." But the husband had been imposed on her by force, and the other man was the lover she had chosen.

Neipperg, writing from the Italian front, trembles at the thought of anything happening to Her Majesty, "whose extreme kindness and angelic nature deserve nothing but happiness." . . . "I think," he says further on, "there is no one on earth who knows you as well as I do." On the day this was written, Neipperg crushingly defeated Murat and his Neapolitans at Tolentino. Twenty days later, he entered Naples as conqueror.

To the lovesick woman, the Austrian no doubt seemed as fine a hero as the Corsican. On her twenty-fifth birthday (December 12th) he suddenly burst in upon her, covered with laurels, and more literally with dust, having covered the distance between Venice and Schonbrunn in three days.

On March 7th, 1816, the Archduchess started for Parma, to take possession of her diminutive states. Neipperg went with her as Chamberlain and Minister of War and Foreign



Affairs. Her father, the Austrian Emperor, certainly displayed a good-sense and humanity not often exhibited by sovereigns where the "honour" of their house is concerned. He must have known by now what the relations were or would shortly be between his daughter and the Count. As a Catholic he must have disapproved them; as a human being, evidently he was not prepared to sentence a young and vigorous woman to a life of celibacy, when he had himself forbidden her to rejoin her husband. French writers, with a regard for technical "virtue" not always to be met with in their nation, however, insist that she should have waited for her husband's death before contracting ties with another. But Napoleon did not wait for death to dissolve his ties with Josephine.

Parma is a delightful little city of fountains. "Here happiness awaits me," the young Archduchess may be imagined to murmur when she took possession of her capital. For the first time in her life, absolute mistress of her actions, she abandoned herself to her love. At the ducal palace, on May 1st, 1817, she bore Neipperg a daughter, who was named after him, Albertina. Everybody knew it; none dared mention it.

It is asserted that a morganatic marriage between the Archduchess and Neipperg took place in secret in the summer of 1820. As Napoleon was still living at that time, it is hardly credible that two people should have troubled to go through a ceremony which could procure them no real advantage, knowing that it was bigamous and void. And Marie Louise, strange to say, had always refused to discuss any suggestion of divorce. When she did hear of the Emperor's death in July, 1821, she wrote: "I confess I was extremely shocked. Though I never had any deep feeling for him, I cannot forget that he is the father of my son, and that far from treating me badly, as the world seems to believe, he always showed me the greatest respect, which, after all, is as much as can be expected in a political marriage. Therefore, I was very much grieved, and if there are reasons to be glad that he has ended his un-

happy life as a Christian should, I could have wished him many more years of life and happiness, provided they were not to be spent near me."

The little Court of Parma went into mourning for the "Most Serene Consort of our August Sovereign," as Neipperg cleverly described the late Emperor. The widow had some reasons for thanking Napoleon for dying just when he did. Mourning gave her an excuse for retirement; which was convenient, as on August 9th in the same summer, she gave birth to a boy, called William, afterwards Count of Montenuovo. It must be taken as almost certain that she also seized the occasion to be married to her lover, though no record of the ceremony appears to have been found. Chateaubriand remembers seeing her the next year, when she was visiting her father at Verona. He noticed she was enceinte. She would hardly have shown herself to her father in that condition unless able to satisfy him that she had put herself right with the Church.

Neipperg is said by the Baronne de Montet to have wearied at last of his wife and to have longed once more for the life of the camp. By an anonymous writer he is said to have occasionally thrashed her. When Lamartine visited them in 1827, they appeared, however, to be living happily enough together. "I had the honour," he says, "of dining yesterday with the Archduchess, and nothing could have been more kind or gracious than the manner of my reception. The Princess, who appears more at her ease in her small realm than in days gone by, is much more affable and agreeable than she used to be at the Tuileries. She is well read, anxious to please, and at the same time very simple in her manners. Her conversation was perfectly natural, yet she spoke of the past as of pre-historic times in no way connected with her or the present. The Empress and Marie Louise are two absolutely distinct individualities united in the same person. She has no regrets and is perfectly content with her new surroundings.

"Count Neipperg, her husband, is at the head of affairs. Being a man of intelligence and common sense, he administers

the Court as well as the Government of her principality with great judgment. Although a foreigner and all-powerful, he commands both affection and respect."

When Neipperg died in February, 1829, aged fifty-four, the Archduchess mourned him as "the best of husbands, most faithful of friends, and all her worldly happiness." "It would be better if the Almighty would take me, too," she wailed in her bereavement—the first real bereavement she had ever known. The soldier does not seem at any time to have been unworthy of her love and confidence. For thirteen years he had administered her large fortune and the finances of the Duchy, and he left but a few louis as inheritance to his children.

Metternich, upon the Field-Marshal's death, proposed that his marriage with the Archduchess of Parma should be made public. "There are several reasons which appear to demand it." Marie Louise wrote later to her father, "As regards the announcement of my marriage with the late Count Neipperg, I leave myself entirely in your hands. Whatever you decide is sure to be right, but I am bound to add that the public announcement would be most agreeable to me and that he would have wished it." It does not appear, however, that the proposal was adopted, possibly because, by assigning a date to the marriage, the illegitimacy of the elder child, Albertina, would have been established.

Six weeks after his death, the Baron de Vitrolles, the French Minister to the central Italian states, reports that "the Archduchess remains inconsolable. During the long conversation I had with her, it was evident that all her thoughts were concentrated on her late bereavement. Her eyes filled with tears when she spoke of it, and it was her one topic of conversation. On the Count she had lavished all her love as his wife and the mother of his children. Those who remember her when she lived in France say that she has much changed and become a great deal thinner. Though taller and having perhaps more regular features, she rather reminds one of the



Duchesse de Berry. She appeared pleased when I commented on this likeness. She speaks well and impresses one as high-minded. She is reputed to have a kind heart, and an easy-going, perhaps volatile nature. What astonished me most was that she appeared to have quite forgotten Paris and her sojourn in France. Of the members of Napoleon's family she seemed to know nothing and has even forgotten those who were attached to her person so far that she questioned me as to their appearance and character. When talking of her days at the Tuileries, she exclaimed, 'Ah, I have been very happy here until now, and the first years of my life seem like a bad dream.' On another occasion, replying to the reproach so often made, even in Italy, that she had forgotten Napoleon in his adversity, she said, 'We princesses are not brought up as other women—we are always prepared for events which will dissolve family ties and separate us from our parents, and even place us in antagonism to them. Look, for instance, at my poor sister, who died in Brazil, far away from all her family.' Marie Louise then finished the conversation by dwelling once more on the virtues of her late husband."

In 1832 her last link with France was severed. In May she received disquieting reports about the health of her eldest son. She wanted to go to him, but in view of the pestilence which threatened Italy at that moment, felt herself bound by duty to stay among her subjects. But the mother triumphed over the sovereign. News came that the King of Rome—the Duke of Reichstadt as he was officially called—was dying. Marie Louise arrived at Schonbrunn, to clasp him in her arms, on June 24th. On July 21st, with a last smile for her, he died.

Josephine and Marie Louise had alike been sacrificed in vain that he might be born.

The Duchess of Parma returned to her States. "If it were not that I have Albertine and Guillaume, who of course demand my care and attention," she wrote to Mme de Grenneville, "I should pray God to call me to Him, that I might



rejoin the two persons I have lost, whom I loved better than anything else on earth." Albertine was sixteen. In the following year she was married to Count Luigi Sanvitale, the Archduchess's chamberlain. The departure of her daughter from her household left Marie Louise lonelier than ever. On February 17th, 1834, she took for her third husband Count Charles de Bombelles—who had succeeded Neipperg as imperial agent at her court. He was an ardent French royalist who had taken service under Austria—a man of cold aristocratic presence, forty-eight years of age. Marie Louise was then forty-two. She married him for companionship and he proved a loyal helpmate; but she did not love him as she had loved Neipperg. At the age of fifty, she is alleged to have had some sort of intrigue with a young tenor named Jules Lecomte—he, at any rate, gave himself out, in a letter to his friend Suverain, to be the successor of Napoleon.

Probably she had much the same feeling for the mountebank as she had for the occupants of her aviary. For her love of animals lasted till the end and outlived her capacity for passion. One tires of a lover, but whoever tired of his dog or cat? On the whole, she managed her Duchy well, with her third husband's capable assistance, and rode out the revolutionary storm of 1848. She looked forward, no doubt, to a happy and peaceful old age, watching the fortunes of her son and daughter; but on December 19th, 1847, she died, having just completed her fifty-eighth year.

The historian is interested in this Hapsburg princess only as the consort of Napoleon. Standing by his side at the Tuileries, she shines with borrowed splendour. To Marie Louise herself, we know that life only properly began when she disappeared from the imperial stage. Her romance consists in her escape from queenhood into womanhood.

## XIV

## DUCHESS ERRANT

THE period known to the French as the Restoration (1814 to 1830) was, as regards France and most other Continental states, a very distinctly romantic epoch. Old dynasties had been set up again on old thrones. The old had for the time being conquered the new. Quite consciously and deliberately, by many people efforts were made to revive the more picturesque features of the Middle Ages and to represent medieval life as adventurous, mettlesome, highly-coloured—in a word, as romantic. As an old man will talk of his really commonplace youth as wonderful and dashing, so these last survivors of a doomed order perceived a glamour about the life of their ancestors which those ancestors themselves had never seen. And they in turn have become romantic figures, as the last upholders of a hundred moribund traditions, as people, too, not at all remote from us—our great-grandparents at most—who yet lived under what would seem to us medieval conditions. Railways, telegraphs, steamboats, in the 'thirties were hardly more than talked of. People modern enough to do the things that we do, had to do them in old-fashioned ways, had to keep the new wine in old bottles—till the bottles burst in 'forty-eight.

The Duchesse de Berry will ever stand out as the most romantic figure of that time, as the most picturesque champion of the Old Régime. Indeed, one has to go a very long way back to find another such heroine. The reason is that she was

in cold fact a spirited independent modern woman masquerading in medieval character.

But with the old order she was peculiarly identified not only by the accident of birth, but by the vicissitudes of her early years. She came of the younger or Neapolitan branch of the Spanish Bourbons, her father being the dull and insignificant Duke of Calabria, afterwards Francis I, King of the Two Sicilies, and her grandfather that sturdy old tyrant Ferdinand IV, styled by his subjects "Nosey." Born on November 5th, 1798, at that ugly yellow palace of Caserta, which many travellers pass unnoticed on the line from Rome to Naples, the girl received in baptism the names of Mary Caroline Ferdinanda Louisa. Marie Caroline we will call her, which was also the name of her grandmother, that cruel, forceful, courageous queen who was loved by Nelson and Emma Hamilton and execrated by millions of Italians. With a very short interval, the first eighteen years of the Princess's life was spent in a sort of exile with the rest of the royal family at Palermo. They were driven from Naples first by the Republicans, next by Murat. Of that side of her grandmother's character which renders her odious in history, the girl saw nothing and probably was allowed to learn very little. She looked upon her grandparents and parents as the innocent victims of wicked, godless men, and hailed the downfall of Napoleon as the return of mankind to virtue and sanity. Nor was she taught gratitude to the English, by whom her grandfather's throne and perhaps her own life had been preserved. In her old age we find her speaking of the British as the people apparently destined to be the scourge of others.

At Palermo she seems to have been brought up in a somewhat casual fashion. Old Ferdinand was a free-and-easy monarch, who liked to mingle with the rabble, and after a day's fishing was not above selling his catches on the water-side. He despised etiquette, and behaved on occasions, according to Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, with what seems to moderns animal indelicacy. A certain coarseness of fibre Marie



The Duchess of Berri.





Caroline undoubtedly inherited from him. Such a man was not likely to insist on too "genteel and ladylike" behaviour from the girls of his family. His son Francis, on the other hand, was a gloomy, priggish person, and he would not allow his daughter to be taught dancing or other polite accomplishments. However, it seems that Marie Caroline learnt French. This was as well, for in 1815, before Ferdinand had been put in possession of the Continental portion of his dominions, her hand was sought in marriage by Charles Ferdinand, Duke of Berry, the nephew of Louis XVIII of France.

The proposal was very properly referred by his Sicilian Majesty to his son. "The same liberty of action," wrote the Duchess in after years, "was allowed me by this kind father. I used it to submit myself with pleasure and confidence to whatever my beloved parents should desire. But the subject of my marriage occasioned me an embarrassment, a shyness, such as I had never experienced." It is difficult to imagine Marie Caroline shy. She was now over seventeen and no doubt eager to get married. The match was a brilliant one. Through her wedding ring she could plainly see a crown. Louis XVIII was old and infirm; his brother and next heir, afterwards Charles X, was close on sixty. True, the Duke of Berry was only Charles's second son, but the elder, the Dauphin, had no children and was understood to have waived his rights to the succession. And, of course, everybody thought the Bourbons had come back to stay. Napoleon was at St. Helena. Europe seemed to have fallen back into the old rut. "We have slumbered ten years; let us forget this bad dream," a German prince had said contentedly, on regaining his ancestral dominions. Marie Caroline looked on herself as the future queen of France and on her husband as the future king.

What sort of king would he have made, this Charles Ferdinand, Duke of Berry? Political insight and true patriotism he may be assumed to have lacked, since he had been one of those emigrés who fought against France and killed their fellow-Frenchmen. In temperament, he was

pleased to see a resemblance between himself and Henri Quatre. They had the same easy good-nature, the same kindness of heart—up to a point. They were alike in their passion for women. A passion, be it said, utterly devoid of sentiment or delicacy, but in the Duke's case at least, accompanied by kindness, liberality, and a certain sense of responsibility.

The marriage took place in Paris in June 1816. Charles Ferdinand was delighted with his bride, who was twenty years his junior. On everyone she made the happiest impression. Her portrait has been painted over and over again, by Sir Thomas Lawrence and Vigé le Brun among others, so we can judge for ourselves whether she was pretty or not. "*Une jolie laide*," a contemporary called her; "*Sans être belle, elle est gentille à manger*," said the Duchesse de Bourbon. One hears of her vague oblique glance—in other words, she had a slight squint. From her Hapsburg ancestors she inherited an ugly lip, which she could not hold shut. In fact, the catalogue of her defects is a long one. But she had pretty silver-gold hair and exquisite feet. Dignified she could not well be—she measured only a metre and a half in height, and went in consequently for high coiffures and high-crowned hats; but charming she undoubtedly was. Though she never wanted for cavaliers, her looks, I gather, were more pleasing to her own sex than to men.

Ill brought-up, a foreigner who had to take dancing lessons after her marriage, she at once set the fashions in Paris. Women who could see straight adopted her *lorgnon*. She took an immense interest in dress, and in her naïvely-written diary never omits to mention the details of her costume day by day. The same record reveals her as a thoroughly happy little wife. Over and over again she speaks of her kind, dear husband. She blames herself for the slightest indiscretion—and her life was a succession of indiscretions! One entry runs: "Went to pick up my husband at the tennis court. As he hadn't told me to come, he was displeased and was cross, which made me cry."

This was written on February 9th, 1820. Four days later, the Duke was struck down by the knife of the assassin Louvel as he left the Opera. Almost his last act was to send for two little girls and recommend them to the protection of his wife and his uncle the King. Marie Caroline clasped their arms round her own tiny daughter, saying, "This is your sister."

The children were indeed sisters. Probably the Duchess was already aware of the existence of the two girls. They were the daughters of the Duke, born during his exile in London. Their mother was an Englishwoman named Amy Brown, the daughter of a parson at Maidstone. She was first seen by the Bourbon prince in a box at Covent Garden, when she seemed to be repelling the advances of other noble exiles. The Duke was more fortunate. At the age of twenty-two Amy already had four children. It is stated that she was a widow. More important still, it was afterwards rumoured that she became the Duke's wife. It was alleged that he was married to her under the simple description of Charles Ferdinand at the French chapel of St. Louis de France near Portman Square. This story was revived many years after, in order, as I suspect, to challenge the pretensions of Marie Caroline's son the Comte de Chambord, and to represent the apostle of legitimacy as himself illegitimate.

But the most careful examination of the registers of St. Louis by impartial persons has failed to reveal any evidence of the marriage. Amy Brown certainly lived with the Prince and bore him two daughters. He was always bothering his friends to keep an eye on her during his absence from London, but in his letters he never once refers to her as his wife. Moreover, during this period he frequently discusses matrimonial projects with various European princesses. Upon the restoration, Amy followed him to France, and died there, a very old woman, in the seventies. So far as has been discovered, she never claimed to be his wife. One of her sons lived till a ripe age at Mantes, but there is no reason to suppose he was of Bourbon blood. Her daughters by the Prince appeared



quite satisfied with the status conferred on them by Louis XVIII. One, the Comtesse d'Issoudun, married the Comte de Faucigny-Lucinge; the other, the Comtesse de Vierzon, married Baron Charette, by whom she became the mother of the famous soldier of the Papacy. Finally, in the Duke of Berry's will, shown by the Duke of Parma to the Vicomte de Reiset, he names these girls specifically as his natural daughters. As this will is dated 1810, he could not have deliberately illegitimated them in the interests of Marie Caroline or her offspring.

To the Duchesse de Gontaut we are indebted for the following dramatic story of Amy Brown's first appearance in Paris. "Of the celebrations upon the King's return to Paris, the gala night at the Opera was the most brilliant. Up to the topmost tier, every box was lit up by a lustre. The royal box was perfectly dazzling, likewise the three boxes on either side, which were filled with the court ladies in their most splendid attire. One of these boxes was occupied by me. The box opposite, I noticed, was empty. Presently I saw enter a woman wearing a lace veil. I recognised her. Her pale, beautiful face was that of the silent lady I had seen at the opera in London. She stood upright in the full light of the chandelier, so was perfectly visible. At the moment of the King's entrance everyone else rose, all eyes being directed towards the royal box. A gentleman usher stepped forward and announced 'The King.' First appeared the Duke of Berry with the other princes, lining up to make a path for His Majesty. In the expectant hush that ensued, I heard a thud in the box opposite. The white lady had disappeared from view. Everyone was looking at the King. Presently I saw the white lady carried away fainting. The Duke of Berry had evidently perceived this. I saw him speak to M. de Clermont, who at once hastened away."

M. de Clermont, shortly after, visited the Duchess in her box and explained what had happened. The white lady

was the Duke's English mistress, Amy Brown. She had arrived from London only an hour before the spectacle and had found a message from her lover instructing her to take her seat in the box for which a ticket had been provided. Upon the entrance of the royal party she perceived her lover and realised for the first time that the father of her children was no other than the heir to the crown of France. The shock of the discovery, the realisation that he would never marry her, caused her to swoon away.

The Duchesse de Gontaut must have been very simple-minded to credit this story. From the moment the Duke sought an introduction to her at Covent Garden, Amy must have known, or at any rate suspected, who he was. The world of exiles at London was not so large that such a secret could be kept for seven years. Moreover, we have positive testimony from His Highness's associates that she knew. No particular reason was needed for a woman to faint in those days.

Amy Brown, I am afraid, can only be ranked among the Duke's many mistresses.

How numerous these were, Marie Caroline discovered in the first months of her widowhood if she had not suspected it before. The affair with the Englishwoman had ended some time before her marriage ; but there was the dancer, Virginie Oreille, who was spoken of as the Duke's *maitresse en titre* in 1818, and whom like Marie Caroline herself, he had left enceinte. Mention was made in his will of a son born already to Virginie, who had been so far looked after by the Dauphine. Some years later, the Duchess recognised her late husband's features in another boy, styled the Comte de la Roche, the son of a girl of gentle birth. This lad followed his father's family into exile and became Marie Caroline's devoted secretary and friend. And there were others. . . . " His Highness has left his mark on many families well known to you, doctor," remarked the Princess to her accoucheur at Blaye. The story goes that on visiting a certain city shortly after the Duke's assassination, she was appealed to by over twenty women, all

of whom declared that they, too, were about to become mothers by the agency of His Royal Highness. Marie Caroline made a mental calculation and remarked, "It is quite possible. My husband spent a whole week in this neighbourhood at the time in question."

Revelations of this sort could hardly have come as a shock to a Bourbon princess, least of all to a grand-daughter of Ferdinand IV. Our heroine gave proof of her hardihood, seven months after her husband's death, by insisting upon the presence of male and stranger witnesses at the actual process of her son's birth, to dispel any doubt which the Orleanist faction might attempt to cast upon it. But she did not attempt, as even women less coarse-grained might have done, to take a posthumous revenge upon her husband by following his example during her widowhood. Eccentric and volage though she was (too eccentric to be considered a suitable wife for the demure Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, widower of Princess Charlotte), she devoted herself entirely in the ten peaceful years that followed to her business as a mother, mother of the future king of France.

Perhaps he would have been king of France if she had been allowed to appear with him among the Parisians those hot, fateful days of July 1830. But Charles X and his elder son abdicated too late and ran away too soon. Most reluctantly, Marie Caroline took her place in the exodus. She dressed herself in man's attire, in wide breeches, riding boots, a long surtout and a broad-brimmed hat. In her belt she stuck two pistols. "What are you got up like that for?" asked the old King. "To defend my son's rights." "Bah! You fancy yourself a heroine from one of Walter Scott's novels," said Charles X impatiently. He did not realise that the situation itself belonged to romance and called for romantic action.

Those few months of dreary exile at Lulworth\* and Holy-

---

\* Then belonging to Thomas Weld, the brother of Mrs. Fitzherbert's first husband.





Charles Ferdinand, Duke of Berri.





rood not only bored Marie Caroline to tears, but satisfied her of the utter helplessness and inadequacy of her son's grandfather and uncle. After all too, her own boy, Henry V, was now legitimate King of France, and it was her business, if it was nobody else's, to seat him on his throne. All the legitimists of France—Chateaubriand, Berryer, Bourmont and the rest—saluted her as their leader. Louis Philip regarded her as his most formidable foe. Within twelve months of the revolution, she left her son with his grandfather, and under varying disguises took the road for the Continent.

Her first visit was to Italy, to the ultra-legitimist Court of the Duke of Modena. Charles Albert of Sardinia dared not meet her openly, but made her a large present of money. At Sestri, on the Levantine Riviera, she had a secret conference with some of her more important partisans. Then she departed for Naples, on a visit to her family, spending two or three weeks at Rome, both going and coming. On December 13th, 1831, she wrote to a friend announcing that she was leaving Rome the following day and directed that her letter should be sent to Massa.

She was going to Massa, as her few confidants knew, to plan her dramatic irruption into France; but what no one of them, even the most intimate, suspected, she was also going on her honeymoon trip.

The chattering, feather-brained, indiscreet little Duchess could keep her own counsel, and, we must suppose, her countenance, marvellously well when she chose. Love, like a cold, will out, it is said. The rule has its exceptions. Yet signs were not wanting if the people about the person of Her Royal Highness had had the wit to read them. M. de Mesnard was not perhaps blind; but he contents himself with remarking in his memoirs that at Rome "Madame received very few persons; but meeting a young man whom she has known in her childhood, she presented him as one of her oldest friends, and received him nearly every day. He appeared greatly attached to Madame, and the recollections of her childhood

endeared him equally to the Princess. In all respects he is a very charming cavalier."

The cavalier was a Sicilian noble, Count Ettore Carlo di Lucchese-Palli, son of the Prince of Campo Franco and heir to the Duca della Grazia. He could trace his descent from Tancred, one of the twelve Norman barons who had founded a kingdom in Sicily. Originally intended for the Church, he had received a better education than most young Italian nobles of his time, and had entered the diplomatic service. He had served as attaché at the Neapolitan legations at Vienna, St. Petersburg, and Madrid, and was about this time acting as Chargé d'Affaires at The Hague. His portrait taken later in life reveals him as a distinctly handsome man of commanding presence, wearing an imperial. We fail to perceive "the English look" which somebody observed in him. At the time of the meeting in Rome he was twenty-four years of age, nine years younger than Marie Caroline.

That they had met in childhood is questioned in some quarters, though I see nothing unlikely about it. They had also had chances of becoming acquainted in Paris, where, according to the Duchesse de Gontaut, the young diplomatist was a familiar figure in Court circles. It is a pity that Marie Caroline has never told us the story of his courtship. He proved himself a shy, unassuming man, so we may fairly conclude that it was she who set the pace. It is a wonder that a woman of her warm, impulsive nature had not fallen in love before. She had lived celibate nearly all through her golden twenties. Now in Italy she found herself free for the first time in her life; in France and England she had always been under the eye of the French court. Yet it is singular she chose this particular moment to kick over the traces. She had consecrated herself to the cause of her son. It was obvious that France would never tolerate the wife of an Italian noble as regent, even if the Bourbon legitimists continued to accept her as their leader. A secret marriage was the only way of compromising the difficulty temporarily—

by the time the thing became known, no doubt she hoped that her son would be seated on his grandfather's throne. So secretly married they were, as the following certificate, found by the Vicomte de Reiset in the secret archive of the Vatican, attests : " I, the undersigned, certify that Her Royal Highness Marie Caroline Ferdinanda Louise, Madame the Duchess of Berry, widow, and M. Ettore Carlo, Count of Lucchese-Palli di Campo Franco, having requested me to unite them secretly in the bonds of holy matrimony, reasons of the utmost gravity forbidding the publication of banns ; being furnished with all the necessary special faculties to proceed with the marriage in absolute secrecy, accordingly, I have united them this day in lawful wedlock, as authorised. Rome, December 14th, 1831. (Signed), Jean Louis Rozaven." (The signatures of the parties follow.)

Thus the knot was tied. The priest, by his name, may be judged a Breton. One is left marvelling by what means Pope Gregory XVI was persuaded to sanction a marriage which he must have known would prejudice the legitimist cause. In such a matter, His Holiness would, I presume, have consulted the Duchess's confessor, and may have been advised that for the sake of the impulsive little lady's soul it would be unsafe to refuse.

For the space of nine days the pair disappear from history. Did they linger by the way at white Orvieto, at Perugia, chilly in December, or indulge their love in some deep vale of the upper Tiber ? It was not till December 23rd that the Duchess reappeared at Massa. Her secret husband was with her. Their secret had not been guarded as closely as they thought, if we are to believe the Abbé Sabatier, afterwards Chaplain to Her Royal Highness. " On January 12th, 1832," he writes, " a couple of days previous to my departure from Rome, I was informed of Madame's marriage with Count Lucchese-Palli, by His Eminence Cardinal Rohan, by Monsignore Fraysinous, Bishop of Hermopolis, and by Mgr. de Retz, auditor of the Rota. I attached little importance to



their statements, frankly disbelieving them, my scepticism enduring even when on stopping at Massa I found myself dining with the Duchess and the Count at the same table."

One would have expected the ecclesiastics to keep silence. I still think they did, and that the Abbé said this at a time when doubts were being expressed about the marriage by the Duchess's enemies and she had not condescended to publish the proofs—as indeed she never did.

In that oblong, many-windowed palace at Massa, whence nowadays you can see the great blocks of marble being brought down from Carrara, Marie Caroline devoted herself once more wholeheartedly to her son's affairs. Under the protection of the Duke of Modena, she received the legitimist chiefs and concerted plans for a rising on behalf of Henry V. The "July Government," whose agents were rigorously excluded from the diminutive duchy, could observe her only from a distance and wonder what exactly was afoot. In April Her Highness was told that the moment had arrived. The loyalists of France expected her. Provence, La Vendée, Brittany, the parts ever renowned for their attachment to throne and altar, would rise against the usurper at the sight of her. She sailed across the gulf in the yacht *Carlo Alberto*, having been kept a weary while waiting on the sands. The wind was favourable but the sea unkind. In a dark stormy night, such as her perfervid imagination must have anticipated, a boat put out to take her ashore. Dressed in one of those masculine disguises in which she seems to have delighted, she landed on slippery rocks and had to make her way, drenched, to a gamekeeper's lodge in the neighbourhood of Marseilles. She held her breath and waited for the signal to show herself. The message she got was that the projected rising had turned out a miserable fiasco. Perhaps a score of enthusiasts had paraded through the streets in the early morning, displaying a white flag and cheering for Henri Cinq. They had been dispersed by the police, a few arrests had been made. Marseilles was hopeless.

✓ Hopeless, perhaps, because too rich and prosperous. The great cities had too much to lose by armed insurrection. Besides, Louis Philip was the Citizen King, the ideal ruler of the bourgeois. La Vendée was different—a remote, poor land, where men had little wealth to lose and would risk that little readily at the call of honour. And Lucchese had not been idle all this time. Availing himself of his immunities as a diplomatist, he had gone ahead, distributing pamphlets and appeals. Marie Caroline, attended by her faithful friend Mesnard, by the Comte de Lorge and the Vicomte de Ville-neuve, set out to cross France. On the other side of the Rhône they were followed for a considerable distance by a suspicious gendarme. Passing by Toulouse and Agen, in the evening of May 7th they reached Plassac, the house of a trusted partisan near Saintes.

Louis Philip knew she had left Massa, but had completely lost the scent. The yacht the *Carlo Alberto* had been seized in the Lion's Gulf, and sure enough, aboard her they found a young woman who had done her best to disguise and conceal herself. The Duchess, sure enough! Fearing a disturbance if she were landed at Marseilles, her captors took her to Ajaccio. There, as it happened, one of the new king's aides-de-camp took a look at her. "That," he exclaimed, "is not the Duchess of Berry!" She was not; she was Mlle. Lebeschu, one of the Princess's maids. . . .

Except that it was marked by no battle or even momentary triumph, the abortive expedition into La Vendée reminds one very vividly of the Young Pretender's adventure in the Highlands. A small force had been secretly organised by the Chouan chiefs. Madame ordered a rising for May 24th. Berryer, Chateaubriand, the brains of the movement in Paris, were appalled. La Vendée was not ready, France was not ready. Berryer came over from Paris, found the Duchess in her hiding-place, and implored her to abandon the whole enterprise. "I promised La Vendée," persisted the brave little woman. The great advocate departed sadly, admitting

that in that little frame there was the making of twenty kings. Still, upon the advice of the military chiefs, she consented to postpone the rising till the night of June 3rd. A few combats took place. The brave peasants were easily overwhelmed and dispersed by the government troops. One of the wounded was brought to the Duchess's hiding place and tended by her. Then there was no other course but flight.

All this time she had been shifting from place to place, sometimes disguised as a peasant lad—"Petit Pierre"—sometimes as a countrywoman. Once she fell in a river and had to swim for it. Another time an old peasant, not in the secret, invited "Petit Pierre" to share his bed. In her boy's dress, skulking along a forest path, she was met and greeted as a princess by one of her agents. He had lately returned from St. Petersburg and gravely discussed with the seeming yokel the project of a marriage between her son and an imperial grand duchess! Changing to woman's attire and going bare-footed like the other campagnardes, she had to stain her feet with mud lest her white skin should betray her. At last she crept into Nantes, and found an asylum at No. 3 Rue Haute de Château, the residence of two reliable adherents, the demoiselles Du Guiny.

Even now she would not give up. During the months that followed she was entreated over and over again by her supporters to leave the country. For five months she stayed at Nantes, holding a miniature court, receiving her agents, hoping against hope for a favourable turn. Abroad, her friends were still busy. Most of all the secret husband. He was at his post at The Hague, where his zeal astonished and delighted the other royalists. The King of the Netherlands was furious with Louis Philip for backing up the Belgian secessionists. He would have made common cause with the French legitimists—if he had had the power. In August, Lucchese came, surreptitiously of course, to Nantes with a letter from the Prince of Orange. The date of that visit is to be remembered. He was not indifferent to his wife's peril.



A letter has been preserved which expresses his anxiety, his sense of humiliation at not being able to share her danger.

“How long will you leave me in this state, my angelic wife? Your journey which exposed you to so many perils, was an extra torment for me, although it did procure me the happiness of seeing you. I owe it to society and to you to appear indifferent to your affairs, and even should you find yourself obliged to proclaim my happiness, you say you wish my name to remain a secret. What a situation is mine! You are given up entirely to your duty (*devoir*), I entirely to my despair (*désespoir*). Release me, I beg of you, from my promise of secrecy, and count upon my discretion. Can’t you trust to my heart?”

The July government felt that the Princess was somewhere in France, but their spies and detectives were completely at fault. (The famous Vidocq, the precursor of Nick Carter, was employed in La Vendée about this time, by the way, but not apparently put on her particular trail.) One day M. Thiers received a mysterious anonymous message, requesting him to meet the writer where is now the junction of the Avenue des Champs Elysées and the Avenue Montaigne. The invitation having been repeated, the minister went. A man appeared who undertook to betray the person of the Duchess of Berry to the government. The price agreed on was five hundred thousand francs.

The traitor was one Simon Deutz, a Jew by race, who upon his conversion, real or feigned, to Christianity was made a pet of by highly-placed people at Rome and recommended to Marie Caroline as a thoroughly trustworthy agent. He knew the Duchess was in Nantes, but had in point of fact some little difficulty in locating her actual abode. At last he succeeded, and representing himself as the bearer of a message from Dom Miguel, the Portuguese pretender, obtained an audience of her on November 6th, 1832. The same evening, as the refugees were sitting down to dinner, the tramp of soldiers was heard in the street outside. The house was surrounded.



Against this eventuality, a refuge had been prepared. In a top room there was a fireplace with a false back or metal screen which, being lifted, disclosed a space four feet wide, fourteen long, five in height. Into this crawled the Duchess, followed by Mlle. de Kersabiec, Mesnard and Guibourg. It seems to me that these followers might have proved their loyalty better by leaving this stifling asylum to the Princess and surrendering themselves to the enemy.

The police entered the house and the search began. Masons were called in to tap the walls, but knocked off work at night-fall, having discovered nothing. Unluckily, two policemen were left on guard in the attic. Their conversation could be heard in the secret closet, and their rude pleasantries moved the Duchess to a fit of giggling. But the honest fellows heard nothing. In the morning one of them thought fit to kindle a fire in the grate with a pile of newspapers. The screen soon became white-hot. Marie Caroline's dress caught fire and she had to extinguish it with her hands, searing them badly. But the smoke could not be put out. To stay longer meant certain death by suffocation. She gave the order to surrender. The screen could not be moved from the inside. They tapped loudly and cried out. The astonished gendarmes lifted the screen and out crept the woman they sought, burned and blackened. "What? Are you the Duchess of Berry?" This time it was.

(Deutz got his five hundred thousand francs, which, according to Alexandre Dumas, was handed to him by a government official at the end of a pair of tongs. He was killed afterwards at the coup d'état of 1851.)

The Princess was at first confined in the castle of Nantes and within two or three days conveyed by sea to the citadel of Blaye on the Gironde. What did Louis Philip propose to do with her? Now whatever may be said against the Citizen King and his ministers, they were mild as rulers go, indisposed to acts of deliberate cruelty. It was obvious that they could gain nothing by putting a princess on her trial for championing

the cause of her son—of a son regarded by thousands of Frenchmen as their legitimate king. French juries regard a mother as justified in doing almost anything for her children.\* It might have been expected, therefore, that having caught her, the government would put her across the frontier with the least possible delay. That this was not done was because, I am convinced, Marie Caroline's condition was suspected by her captors before she was removed from Nantes. The visits of Count Lucchese must have been known to the servants of the Du Guiny household; and we may be sure quite that the police exerted themselves to make those servants talk and that they pieced together every scrap of tittle-tattle and domestic gossip.

At any rate, it is clear from her husband's letter, Marie Caroline herself must have known what would happen within a few months, and the day after her arrest, it strikes me, was the proper time for the disclosure. Thus she would have avoided the tedious imprisonment that followed and the horrible indelicacy of that semi-public accouchement. But she never knew when she was beaten, and perhaps hoped she would be released before nature betrayed her. At Blaye she was kept as a state prisoner with a suite of her own. The eyes of all Europe were turned on her. The legitimists who would not fight for her were prodigal of their sympathy. The Government was questioned as to its intentions. Such a thing as a state prisoner was unknown to French law, it was argued. Why was she not brought to trial? Instead of being examined by a magistrate, she was examined at the end of January by a board of medical men, who professed concern for her health. Their report was published. They said no word about pregnancy, but they let it be inferred. On

---

\* During the late war, for instance, the French courts ruled that a woman could not be prosecuted for harbouring her son, a deserter, as she was only acting in accordance with natural law. But English mothers who followed this natural law were punished with six months' imprisonment.

the boulevards, in the cafés, men whispered and sniggered ; in the salons of the Faubourg, the legitimists talked in undertones and wondered. Four duels were fought.

The Government itself was not quite sure . . . as yet. To cope with so delicate a situation, a jailer of no delicacy whatever was required. Such was found in General Bugeaud, once a Bonapartist and now a fanatical Orleanist. Afterwards he was to win a marshal's bâton and a dukedom by his services in Algeria—where, by the way, he smoked a band of Arabs to death in a cave, their place of refuge. A determined man was Bugeaud. He was warned that the Duchess was very clever and courageous, he knew that every other man he met might be a royalist in disguise. He boasted that she would never trick him, but any number of letters were smuggled through to the prisoner. If she was to have a child, all the world should know it. Decency forbids one to specify the precautions with which he surrounded the unfortunate woman. One rejoices that she was herself of rather coarser fibre than most women. Bugeaud himself would not have broken her spirit, but nature could not be arrested. On February 26th, 1833, came her statement : “ Forced by pressure of circumstance and by the measures taken by the Government, although I had the most serious reasons for keeping my marriage secret, I now owe it to myself, as well as to my children, to declare that I was secretly married during my stay in Italy.”

Enormous was the jubilation of Bugeaud—intense the satisfaction of the Orleanists—unspeakable the chagrin of the legitimists. “ Even were her child born in the public square, she should deny having borne it ! ” wrote a furious partisan. What is inexplicable even at this time of day is the form of her confession. Why did she not name the father ? Her ill-timed reticence set every scandalous tongue wagging, brought forth a disgusting crop of scandal and innuendo. Everybody, of course, had private information. . . . (When some luckless wretch was sentenced, sixteen years ago, for

alleging that a certain reigning sovereign had been secretly married, every second man in the London clubs would tell his neighbour in the strictest confidence that he had been present at the ceremony.) Poor Mesnard was the father most frequently suggested; in the cheaper cafés and estaminets an Italian painter was the selection. Whoever he was, the legitimist cause was done for—torpedoed by its own skipper. Berryer and Bourmont ground their teeth. Why couldn't the little fool have got away to England while there still was time and had her baby there? Her son—the right one—had been called *l'enfant du miracle*; had she hoped for another miracle to avert the birth of this other one?

Meanwhile, Louis Philip determined that the ordeal should proceed. The European press cried shame. "One of the most revolting proceedings the world has seen," said an English paper. The strange thing is that the victim herself did not appear much to mind. She found amusing company in the officers of the garrison. Young St. Arnaud, to win his bâton twenty years later in the Crimea, tickled her ear with his music. She was particularly fond of a song beginning

"Tu veux devenir ma compagne  
Jeune Albanaise aux pieds légers"—

which sounds pretty, whatever the air may have been. Menière, the accoucheur sent her from Paris, delighted Her Royal Highness with his anecdotes, some of them rather highly spiced. What Lucchese was doing all this time we do not know. If any of the rumours flying about reached his ears, he must have suffered more intensely than his wife. He was able to communicate with her, apparently, for she told the doctors that "he" hoped it would be a girl.

A girl it was—prettily named Rosalie, after the patron saint of Palermo—born on May 10th, 1833, in the citadel of Blaye. Bugeaud had a host of witnesses ready. "Are you the mother of this child?" asked the Sous-Préfet. "Yes,"



assented the Duchess. Then, at a sign from her, Doctor Deneux read her declaration: "The child here present is the daughter of the Duchesse of Berry, wife of Count Ettore Lucchese-Palli, of the princes of Campo Franco, Chamberlain to His Majesty the King of the Two Sicilies, domiciled at Palermo."

The secret was out at last. It wasn't Mesnard, it wasn't Rosambo, but an Italian noble of whom probably most of those present had never heard. Of course, many still professed incredulity. Louis Philip expressed relief and ordered the Princess to be set at liberty. The loyalist *Gazette de France* assured Marie Caroline that her adherents' respect for her was in no way diminished. "You have secretly married a descendant of that Tancred who is one of the glories of your native kingdom. It is not surprising that your heroic heart should succumb to the spell of those heroic Norman knights, but the ties you have contracted in no way release you from your duty to France."

June 5th was the day of liberation. Crowds flocked to see her go—to stare at the baby. Lucchese Palli's daughter came in for more attention than her half-brother the Duc de Bordeaux. "I am glad to leave Blaye," said the defeated woman, "but sorry to leave France." "What torments have I not endured in that citadel," she complained to Menière: "prison, sickness, insult, treachery. . . . I don't know how I supported it. A woman like me, outraged, crushed, beneath a superhuman burden!"

She had not really felt it as badly as all that. She was embarked now upon the frigate *Agathe*, which made sail for Sicily by the long sea route round Portugal and Spain. Went with her the baby, of course, Dr. Menière, Mesnard, the Prince and Princesse de Bauffremont, and the faithful Lebeschu, acquitted and released for her share in the abortive expedition. Also went the watch-dog Bugeaud, to see the last of his captive, and poor St. Arnaud, whose natural gaiety was converted into woe unutterable by the unaccustomed horrors

of the sea. But there were others who did not go. Hundreds of the Duchess-errant's humble partisans, the Vendéens who had fought with matchlocks and pitchforks for the cause of Henri Cinq, lamented for many a long year in the dungeons of Mont St. Michel that she had ever come among them. The high-born rebels—Mesnard, De Lorge, Villeneuve, and their like—who had not fought but incited others to fight, had been set free by sympathetic juries.

It took the *Agathe* over a month to reach Sicily. It does not seem to have been a very pleasant voyage, looked at from any point of view. Bugeaud found himself especially uncomfortable. The captain of the frigate seems to have taken pleasure in reminding him that he was on shipboard and not in command. Not unnaturally, Her Royal Highness gave him the cold shoulder. When in sight of Sicily, the General observed within hearing of his late captive that he had half a mind to take a trip round the island and wondered if the roads were free from brigands. "General," said the Duchess, "you would run no risk from brigands; but in Sicily, if any one should chance to have a grudge against you, he could get you assassinated for a ducat." This was plain speaking. The General abandoned all thought of landing in the isle of Theocritus, not, as he explained, because he was afraid, but because of his responsibilities to his wife and children.

At last Palermo was sighted. Bugeaud took leave of the Princess. "You do not like me, but you cannot refuse me your esteem," ventured this strangely tactless officer.

"I do not refuse you that," was the cold reply, "but I ask myself how a man of honour could have accepted a job like yours."

"My attachment to the House of Orleans . . ." began the explanation, which need not be continued further. Yet Bugeaud was a fine soldier, and it is very largely to him that France owes the possession of her most important dependency.

On July 8th Marie Caroline stepped ashore at Palermo, on the arm of her husband, who had come out to meet her.

Well, the great adventure was over now. She had been through deep waters, and a little bedraggled had scrambled out on the other side. Menière had advised her to resign herself to the happiness of private conjugal life. But poor Lucchese was dismayed to find that she was still supremely concerned for the interests of her son, and her head was still full of political schemes. From her brother (he was now king) at Naples, she had a right royal welcome. Taking her husband and baby with her, she hurried northwards. Old Charles X and the exiled family had moved from Scotland (where, indeed, they were not much appreciated) to Austria. They had been unspeakably disgusted by the news from Blaye. "Never mention that woman to me again," said the Duc d'Angoulême. The ex-King informed Marie Caroline that he could not receive her or allow her to see her children till she had produced the proofs of her second marriage.

The indignant woman met his ambassadors, Ferronays and de Montbel, at Florence. "But I give you my word of honour," protested the mother of "Henri Cinq." She was told that nothing less than the certificate of marriage would satisfy the old King. One would have thought these highly-placed persons incapable of entertaining such suspicions of their own womenfolk! "But if I place in your hands the proofs of my marriage," argued the Duchess, "they will be used to deprive me of the regency of my son." There, perhaps, we have the clue to her otherwise unaccountable reticence. Lucchese took a hand in the discussion. Finally, de Montbel went to Rome, spoke to the Cardinal Vicar, and was allowed with his own eyes to inspect the marriage certificate.

Convinced at last that his daughter-in-law was "an honest woman," Charles gave his consent to her meeting her son. But his guardianship he would not relinquish to her. Slowly, Marie Caroline came to see that she must henceforth be the wife of Lucchese and the mother of his children, that as a political personage she had ceased to exist. Partly in order to extinguish her, the old king and his eldest son half withdrew

their abdications, temporised, and refused to allow the French legitimists to greet her boy as king of France. He succeeded at last to the empty title on the death of his uncle in 1844, but was universally known as the Comte de Chambord till his death in the early 'eighties.

Marie Caroline settled down at Grätz in Styria, establishing her summer quaretrs at Brunnsee, not far away. She saw Henry frequently, but as years went by became more and more absorbed in her second husband and his family. This is a portrait of "Pacha," as she nicknamed the Count. He "invariably observed towards her the respectful and subordinate attitude of a prince consort towards a queen. Always he addressed her in the third person, and requested her orders for the day's arrangements. He was an excellent companion, accustomed from his youth up to the life of courts, highly educated, affable, a fine cavalier. His conversation was charged with verve, wit, and southern vivacity, but his gaiety never exceeded the limits of propriety, and on all occasions was governed by irreproachable tact."

In the 'forties we find the pair at Venice. Marie Caroline had bought the Palazzo Vendramini, and there for twenty years she led a happy life, entertaining like the queen she had expected to be, attracting distinguished strangers from far and near. She built a theatre attached to the palace, admitting only French and Russians to her troupe because they alone could pronounce French properly. She bore five children to Lucchese. Poor little Rosalie, the cause of all the mischief, had died at Leghorn the year of her birth while her mother was hugging her first-born son at Leoben. But she was succeeded in 1835 by another girl, Clementina, by Francesca in '36, by Isabella in '38, and finally, in '40, by the much desired heir, named Ardinolfo after some Lombard ancestor. "Pacha" had succeeded by now to the dukedom Della Grazia.

In the year '64 Marie Caroline's happiness was rudely shattered. Her eldest child (Chambord's sister), the dethroned and exiled Duchess of Parma, died; and exactly two months



later, Lucchese himself, smiling and affable, "a perfect cavalier" to his last gasp. Apparently, though, he had not been much of a business man, for his widow found herself faced with ruin. She owed thousands and thousands of pounds. Her Austrian creditors threatened to levy an execution on her property at Brunnsee. Then stepped in the Comte de Chambord. With a large cheque and a dignified gesture, he dismissed his mother's creditors; but her collections and furniture went under the hammer all the same. Luckily all her daughters had married well. The Venetian palace was given up, and the charming, gracious old lady retired to Brunnsee, not much relishing a quiet life, we are told. To the last, she was always talking about France, where it is curious to reflect that she passed only fifteen years out of her seventy-two; for Marie Caroline, Madame, Princess of France and the Two Sicilies, Duchess of Berry, latterly Duchess della Grazia, passed away at Brunnsee on April 16th, 1870.

XV

THE QUEEN OF SPAIN'S GUARDSMAN

AT no time in history have women played a more conspicuous part in state affairs than in the first half of the nineteenth century. This may sound odd to those who like to picture our grandmothers and great-grandmothers as exclusively occupied with paying calls and making antimacassars, as delicate creatures who fainted at the sight of a mouse and screamed at the mention of trousers, as generally stuffy, silly, and incapable. Not of that sort, assuredly, were Josephine, Emma Hamilton, Lola Montez, Georges Sand, and George Eliot—nor the Duchesse de Berry! During this period and long after, Victoria presided over the affairs of this empire not without ability; earlier, Maria da Gloria (incongruously named) kept her seat, in spite of the rudest shake-ups on the throne of Portugal; Isabel II held on, certainly without ability, but with masculine courage, to the throne of Spain; and her mother, Maria Cristina, secured her succession to that throne after one of the toughest fights recorded in history. These women were possibly “stuffy,” in the language of our shingled maidens; but theirs was the stuff of which heroes are made.

Maria Cristina (by an odd coincidence, the last queen regent of Spain was a Cristina too) was another of Francesco of Naples' thirteen children, a half-sister of the Duchesse de Berry, her mother having been a Spanish Bourbon. She was born in Sicily in 1806; she owed her vigorous, full-blooded

temperament rather, I should think, to her generous native soil than to her effete ancestry. She was a good horsewoman and a good shot, and she was undoubtedly handsome. "She had eyes thirsting for pleasure," years afterwards wrote the Princesse Clementine; an Englishman writing in *The Times*, under date October 28th, 1840, recalls her in her girlhood as "a thin but beautiful young woman," adding: "Eleven years have passed since then, and though still fresh and beautiful, she has grown into an embonpoint, which though not disagreeable to me, is distasteful to many. For the rest, she is just as gay and *degagée* as she was."

Confirmation comes from a French source: "Queen Cristina is of medium height. She has a beautiful face. Her eyes are of remarkable vivacity. Her expression exhibits a gentle firmness blended with charming grace. The calm strength and keenness revealed by her countenance explains how this woman was able to struggle for ten years against the audacity, the malice and the cunning of the political party which now exploits Spain."

That struggle was in its essence the same as her elder sister's. Its object was to keep the crown on her child's head. The story of the two princesses is not at all dissimilar. Devoted mothers, each ended by jeopardising her child's interest by a surrender to passion. But the Spanish queen on the whole fared better than the mother of the Comte de Chambord. At any rate, her great-grandson is still King at Madrid.

But Caroline had better luck in the matter of her first husband. Ferdinand VII, to whom Cristina was married in 1829, at the age of twenty-three, was not only one of the worst sovereigns on record, but an unpleasant, worn-out roué. He had already buried three wives, none of whom had left a child. It was the fourth Queen's business to provide an heir to the throne of Spain. As may be easily imagined, therefore, she was not welcomed with overflowing cordiality by the King's brother and heir presumptive, whose name has become familiar

even to those who have not the least idea what his claims were—Don Carlos.

Unluckily for Spain and Europe generally, Cristina succeeded in giving birth only to two girls—the elder of whom is known to history as Isabel II. Despairing of ever having a son, Ferdinand by a bold stroke set aside the salic law and declared his infant daughter his heir. Carlos promptly challenged the legality of this act and was backed, on account of his known opinions, by all the clerical and reactionary forces in the country. Notwithstanding, upon her father's death in September, 1833, little Isabel was proclaimed Queen and Cristina, under her husband's will, assumed the regency.

The tale of the terrific and protracted struggle that followed has been told elsewhere.\* The first Carlist war, terminated by the Treaty of Vergara in 1839, secured the crown to Isabel. A year later, Cristina followed Don Carlos into exile.

Her ship had gone aground on the same shoal as her sister's.

To the princess of those days, as to the Mohammedan woman, widowhood alone procured real freedom. Cristina, like all girls of her rank and nation, had accepted the husband provided for her by her parents, because, of course, it would never have occurred to her to resist. She tried to like her middle-aged husband, and certainly did her duty by him. The man was not at least ungrateful—he left her the regency and an income of 450,000 pounds sterling, with the common restriction that she should not marry again. Not marry again? One imagines this voluptuous woman of twenty-seven pondering that proviso. But what could she expect? The Queen-Regent of Spain could not be the wife of any man.

Meantime she might eat, drink and be merry. Widowhood does not seem to have weighed on her as heavily as on most Latin women. She hadn't much dignity, and like all her family, was fond of rough fun. She had all sorts of favourites,

---

\* See the present writer's "A Queen at Bay." (Hutchinson.)



as was remarked in certain quarters, with supreme disgust, drawn from the vulgar lower classes ! From a mere woman's point of view they were not all badly chosen.

Mr. Slidell Mackenzie, an officer in the United States navy, was touring Europe at this time and was privileged to see the Queen-Regent at the Conservatoire of Music at Madrid. He writes : " As she advanced up the passage to her seat, she was received with enthusiastic *vivas* and waving of fans, which she returned with a rare grace and a captivating smile directed to those she distinguished. She was dressed with great simplicity and good taste, in black with jet ornaments, and a panache in her hair which was dressed *à la Chinoise*. Though her nose was somewhat large, and withal slightly *retroussé*, yet the style of her face was decidedly good, and the effect enhanced by a sweet air of amiability and goodness of heart. The three princesses were attended by their chamberlains, among whom I particularly noticed one on whose arm hung the Queen's pelisse of velvet and costly furs . . . a very noble-looking man, with a classical cast of countenance, and a pale complexion, contrasting strongly with his black and nicely-defined moustache, and a full, dark eye, which, while it reposed languidly within its lids, seemed capable of lighting up and kindling with excitement and fire. I was told that his name was Muñoz, whom it was impossible not to look on as a most happy fellow, to hold an office of the kind about the person of so charming a lady."

Presumably our gallant and susceptible sailor was not familiar with Spanish. Otherwise he must have heard that Muñoz was a happier fellow than he supposed, and occupied an even more intimate position than that of chamberlain. The Queen's paramour, the Carlists would have muttered ; her lover, the Republicans would have said with a sneer ; the Loyalists would have shaken their heads and asked questions of each other. Everybody knew all about the noble-looking man. He was Agustin Fernando Muñoz ; he was about twenty-five years of age ; of a good family, some said ; yes,

added others, but his father had come down to keeping a cigar store at Tarancon. He was a private in the Royal Guard—as Godoy, some must have remembered, had been before him; and like Godoy he attracted the notice of the King's wife. How did the affair begin? That will never be known with certainty. "For lovers there are many eyes," says the poet; but did anyone really see the guardsman pick up the Queen's handkerchief and press it to his lips one day when she drove past him, as some allege he did? Still, he must have signified his personal interest in her somehow.

Three months after Ferdinand's death, in the depth of winter, Cristina, to everyone's surprise, set out from her capital to pay a visit to Quita Pesares, a small country seat which she owned near La Granja, and at that season a most uncomfortable place of residence. She took with her no women—only Don Francisco Palafox, her aide-de-camp, a gentleman usher named Carbonell, and a single guardsman—Muñoz. The snow lay deep on the Sierra Guadarrama. In the pass of Novacerrada the royal coach skidded and would have tumbled into the ravine had it not collided with a timber waggon. The Queen alighted, made a sign to Muñoz, and walked on, leaning upon his arm. Some supposed that this was the first notice Her Majesty had taken of the guardsman, but that seems to me very unlikely. Arrived at Quita Pesares, she took a stroll in the garden accompanied by the A.D.C. and the guardsman. Presently she dispatched Palafox on a message to the household. Left alone with her, Muñoz may have declared his love. Or Cristina may have declared hers. I am inclined to think that their betrothal took place in the frost-bound garden of Quita Pesares that cold December afternoon.

With the scandal of Blaye ringing in her ears, was the Queen for a moment tempted to take the guardsman only as a favourite? For she was risking the substance of royalty where her sister risked only the shadow. There was nothing in Ferdinand's will against his widow taking a lover. By

taking another husband, she stood to lose not only the regency but what in after years, I fear, she would have valued more—her £450,000 a year. “All for love and the world well lost,” was an aspiration which did not appeal to this eminently hard-headed if warm-hearted woman. One wonders whether she discussed these things with Muñoz. In the event, a secret marriage was decided upon ; though Caroline’s recent exposure was anything but encouraging.

Muñoz was deputed to broach the matter, in the first instance, to his own diocesan, the Bishop of Cuenca. But when his lordship heard who the bride was, he referred the young man to the Patriarch of the Indies. (Why the Patriarch of the Indies ?) But His Eminence was on the Carlist side and refused to dispense with the formality of banns. In this extremity, Cristina herself took the matter up and addressed herself to a friend of hers, Cardinal Tiberi. On the strength of a licence granted by this dignitary, at seven in the morning, December 28th, 1833, less than three months after Ferdinand’s death, in the presence of two witnesses, the Marques de Hertero and Don Miguel Acabado, the marriage of the Queen-Regent of Spain with the son of the cigar merchant of Tarancon was solemnised by Doctor Antonio Marcos Gonzales.

Cristina was in a better position than her sister to close men’s mouths. To keep her new husband near her person she appointed him chamberlain. They were not too discreet. At the ball she danced with him most of the time. He behaved as if he were her husband, conducted her to her carriage, handed her in and took his seat facing her. His father and mother came to Madrid and sat opposite the royal box. They visited Her Majesty at the palace and took leave of her with the words, “*Adios, hija !*” (Good-bye, daughter). People guessed—one thing or the other.

Cristina wanted the love and counsel of a husband just then. Navarre and the Basque Provinces had declared for Don Carlos, the Liberal elements, on whom alone her child could rely for support, were clamouring for reform, the plague



was raging in the capital. On July 24th, she drove through the streets of Madrid and read her speech from the throne. The people looked at her, all smiles and graciousness, and rejoiced in their gallant Queen. She was more gallant than the dull-witted knew. As she stood on the steps of the throne, the cynosure of all eyes, her comely form was cramped and tortured by a harness of whalebone. With a relief that can be imagined, she was driven back to her retreat of La Granja.

Then—she suddenly professed to be scared of the pestilence—she shut herself up in the little hunting-box of El Pardo, surrounded herself with a strict sanitary cordon, and forbade anyone to approach her. She dreaded contagion. . . . And on the night of November 7th she bore her first child to Muñoz.

Hurriedly the little one was smuggled away by a discreet dame to Segovia. Presently Her Majesty discovered that no further precautions against the plague were necessary, and went about in public. Within a few weeks, she was seen paying particular attention to a richly-robed baby whom Señora Castanedo brought to Aranjuez from Segovia. This time no one was deceived. The Queen was the mother of the guardsman's child.

She knew, of course, that the world knew. But, like her sister, she was not blighted by the breath of scandal. So long as her subjects supposed her only to be Muñoz's mistress she didn't mind—they must not discover she was his wife. I do not imagine that anyone will blame her for this, at this time of day, since surrendering the regency meant surrendering her child. But I cannot help in this connection quoting the opinion of Major Martin Hume: "If she was married to Muñoz, she was a thief; if she was not married to him, *she was worse.*" Well, well. . . .

With the fate of Godoy, the unlucky lover of Maria Luisa ever before his eyes, Muñoz kept well out of the way. The scene of their connubial fondlings was a pavilion in the park of El Pardo, which the wags called *la jaula de Muñoz* (Muñoz's



cage). Cristina's genius for maternity was not an advantage at this stage. She had now borne a boy, who would have been much more useful to her first husband. In January 1836 both children of the second marriage were sent off to Paris, while their mother defended the rights of their half-sisters in Madrid.

The curtain was rung down on the first act in October, 1840. Don Carlos for the time being was disposed of, but the ever-recurring trouble with the Liberals had come to a head. It was time, the papers said, to finish with Cristina, and no more faith could be placed in her or in Ministers appointed by her. At Valencia she was met with a formal proposal that she should accept a colleague in the regency. Espartero, the General who had crushed the Carlists, was meant. "I prefer," was her answer, "to resign the regency altogether and to leave the country."

And she meant it. Muñoz, it is said, tried to dissuade her. Perhaps desire to see her babies in Paris had somewhat to do with her resolution. Finding her inflexible, the Ministers looked about for some plausible excuse to be offered to the public. One, Cortina, saw her privately. If Her Majesty would confirm a certain rumour, her step could be explained without fomenting any more political feeling. "To what rumour do you refer?" asked Cristina icily. "Well," said Cortina, "it is—er—rumoured that Your Majesty has contracted an alliance, which you as a widow are perfectly entitled to do, but which would involve the surrender of the regency."

And Cristina replied, "No, it is not true!"

The Minister could say no more, and "the state of the nation and the state of her health" were vaguely put forward in the manifesto as the grounds of her abdication. There was a harrowing parting between her and her little girls. Leaving them to the care of Espartero, she left Valencia by sea, arriving at Port Vendres in France next day.

She was cordially welcomed in France.

Louis Philip met her at Fontainebleau. The old man



Muñoz, Duke of Riansares.



bore her no grudge on account of her sister, and his queen, Marie Amélie, was her aunt. She was accommodated in the Palais Royal, whence she stole away, I conjecture, to have a look at the children from whom she had so long been separated. Presently she posted off to Italy. She re-established friendly relations with her brother, the King of Naples, who had taken the side of Don Carlos ; and what was much more important, she got Pope Gregory XVI to waive and rectify certain canonical informalities incident to her secret marriage. This was a great weight off Cristina's mind. It established the legitimacy of her children by Muñoz, and to her own formal conscience made all the difference between sin and righteousness. From this moment onwards she made no secret of her marriage. Returning to Paris, she lived openly with Muñoz and her second family at a house in the Rue de Courcelles and also at Malmaison, the former abode of Josephine.

The Papal dispensation meant a great deal for Muñoz. He openly, but without undue presumption, took charge of his wife's affairs. A sort of shadow cabinet sat at the house in the Rue des Courcelles, and very soon Cristina was at open war with Espartero reigning in Madrid. In the beginning of 1844, Espartero had to run for it, and the fourteen-year-old Isabel took over the reins of government. Her first act was to send for her mother. Cristina was just then expecting the birth of her third or fourth child by Muñoz, but she arrived at Aranjuez on March 21st. Washington Irving describes the meeting between mother and daughter as most affecting.

So here was Cristina back in triumph. And naturally almost her first concern was for her dear Agustin Fernando and their children. Muñoz was created a grandee of Spain of the first class, under the title of Duke of Riansares (that being the name of the river on which his native town stands) ; and in the official gazette appeared a royal decree authorising the marriage contracted eleven years before.

One of Mr. Squeers's " parents," it may be remembered,



on being shown two illegitimate children, was very much disappointed to find they looked so much like other children. By this time we shall not be disappointed to find that people who have made romantic love matches turn out very much like other middle-aged married couples. Also, that their own earlier experience by no means inspires them with sympathy for young people in love. Cristina's married life with old Ferdinand cannot have been a pleasant memory ; yet we find her the arch-conspirator in the disgraceful scandal of the Spanish marriages which resulted in forcing the girl Queen into the arms of a loathed and impotent suitor. "Incapable of deliberate cruelty, Cristina sacrificed everybody and everything to her own aims, with the cheery conviction that the others would not mind much and that if they did, it would all come right in the end."

But poor mismated Isabel was incapable of showing resentment against her bullying step-father or her half-brothers, and half-sisters. Muñoz himself became a senator, a general and a Knight of the Golden Fleece. His father was made Count of Retamoso ; titles and offices were conferred on his brothers. Odd titles after the fashion of the realm, such as the Count of Arboleda (the plantation), Countess of Vista Alegra (pleasant view), etc., were conferred on the children, whose chairs at court functions were placed on the same level as the Queen's.

Why not ? reasoned the father and mother—they are the grand-children of the King of Naples and descendants of Louis XIV. So Muñoz found nothing improper or incongruous in the proposal of a South American exile, General Flores, to make his eldest boy King of Ecuador. In 1926 it is difficult to imagine an American king ; but there was an Emperor of Mexico in the 'sixties, an Emperor of Brazil as late as '89, and talk of a monarch for this same state, Ecuador, had been going on for some time. Flores was allowed to equip an expedition at Santander and Bilbao, and men of the regular army were licensed to take service under him.

Public attention was just then engrossed by the royal marriage ; but a dispute occurred in London between the agents of the filibusters, and this brought about the exposure of the project. The Ministry could no longer shut its eyes to what was going on. The officers and men who had joined Flores were recalled to their regiments, and his forces melted away. Cristina's hope of a crown for her son faded away, and all she could offer him by way of consolation was the Dukedom of Tarancon, his father's place of origin.

By this time Her Majesty's meddling with public affairs, her subordination to French policy and her rapacity, had again made her thoroughly unpopular. In 1847 she found it prudent to leave the country once more and go back to Malmaison. She built an oratory (since pulled down) and played the *vieille dévote*, while Riansares looked after the dollars.

A few months later, upon the advice of Louis Philip, she went back to Madrid, to contrive a formal reconciliation between Isabel and her nominal husband. She stayed on. Muñoz while, by no means neglecting politics, directed attention to speculation and railway finance. We find him Chairman of the Northern Railway and associated with his brother and the banker, Salamanca, in promoting a great many syndicates. In 1854, for the third and last time, the Queen-mother received notice to quit. She and her husband took refuge in the royal palace, while her daughters, the Countess of Vista Alegre and the Marquesa del Castillejo, were packed off to France in disguise. The disappointed mob wreaked their vengeance on Cristina's own house, and this, her last home in Spain, went up in a blaze.

She and Muñoz settled down at Malmaison and their summer villa at Ste. Adresse, overlooking Havre, to enjoy their wealth. Her eldest boy, he who was to have been King of Ecuador, died at the age of twenty. Three sons were left to her : the new Duke of Tarancon, the Count de Gracia, and the Count del Recuerdo ; and three daughters, of whom the two eldest married Prince Ladislas Czartoryski (whose family

own a wonderful house on the Ile St. Louis) and the Neapolitan Prince del Drago. Their lot was probably pleasanter than their royal half-sister's. In 1868 she, too, came flying over the frontier, an exile like her mother.

A writer in a London paper remembers having been taken when he was a child to see old Cristina at Ste. Adresse. "She was then a stout old lady, with magnificent black eyes and a keen, cynical face, not without sardonic humour. She was kind and gracious, with a manner almost bluff in its hearty bonhomie; and her very numerous family adored her." She was again a widow. Her handsome guardsman had died in 1873. Five years later, Cristina did indeed return to the country which had forgotten and almost forgiven her, to assist at the marriage of her grandson, Alfonso XII. Seven months later, on August 29th, 1878, before Isabel could arrive to close her eyes, when the Norman watering-place looked its brightest and gayest, the wife of Ferdinand VII and Agustin Muñoz died at the age of seventy-two.

## XVI

## THE LAST ENGLISH PRETENDER

IN June of the year 1866 there appeared in the Court of King's Bench a little old woman, close on seventy years of age, to plead a case which amounted to nothing less than a claim to the throne of England. Yet it is unlikely that Queen Victoria ever slept the less soundly o' nights, for the claim was as palpable a tissue of fraud and forgery and self-delusion as has ever been raised outside the covers of a sensational novel. Before unsympathetic judges and a dumbfounded jury was unfolded a story rich in all the episodes of fictional romance. It was a tale of secret marriages in high places, of how an heiress of the Blood Royal was re-baptized as the daughter of a humble house-painter by a king's command; of a romantic and beauteous Polish princess who fell in love with and wedded a simple English clergyman, and of their daughter who was beloved of a royal duke and a common earl; and of how the (comparatively) low-born nobleman surrendered Beauty to his Betters, being a gentleman who evidently knew his place. All this and much more was related to an astonished and incredulous world by that little old lady of nearly seventy summers, whose name was Lavinia Janetta Horton de Serres Ryves. Yet strange to say, the newspapers of the time paid little attention to this amazing case, beyond including it in their law reports. *The Times* dismissed it in a small leaderette, the *Penny Illustrated* published the lady's portrait, but beyond that, it seems to have excited no general interest. Those



were the days before journalism was journalism. Imagine the sensation such a claim would excite to-day ! The armies of reporters and camera men besieging the Law Courts, the crowds outside Buckingham Palace, the enormous front-page headlines, the picture papers bulging with excitement and photographs of every member of the Royal Family. Mrs. Ryves would certainly have been invited to star in the film version of her imaginary grandmother's life in spite of her sixty-nine years, while her views on short skirts, bobbed hair, and the chance of recovering the Ashes for England would have been telegraphed to every quarter of the civilised globe. Yet she does not seem even to have written a serial story for a Sunday paper. Her modest little pamphlet of vindication, " Was Justice Done ? " fell flat. The lack of general interest contrasts curiously with the furore caused only a decade later by the somewhat similar but less startling Tichborne claim.

Lavinia Ryves was the elder daughter of John Thomas De Serres, a painter of some repute, and of his wife, born Olivia Wilmot. She had married another painter, Antony Thomas Ryves, whom she had divorced as long ago as 1841 and who never comes into the story. By him she had several children and her eldest son was joined with her as petitioner in her ambitious claim. She chose to call herself the Princess Lavinia of Cumberland and Duchess of Lancaster. Her claim, which she asked the Courts on this occasion to uphold, was that her mother was the legitimate daughter born in lawful wedlock of Henry Frederick Duke of Cumberland, the brother of King George III of England. In support she produced an array of certificates and documents, over seventy in all, purporting to be signed by the Earls of Chatham and Warwick, by the Duke of Kent, Queen Victoria's father, and even by George III himself. Of these the most startling was an alleged certificate of marriage, performed by a relative of her own, a Dr. Wilmot, between George, when Prince of Wales, and Hannah Lightfoot, " the fair Quaker." So that, as was pointed out in court by the horrified Attorney-General, it was

intended to prove not only that the late Duke of Cumberland's marriage with Mrs. Anne Horton was invalid, but that Queen Charlotte was never the lawful wife of King George III ; that in consequence George IV and his brothers were illegitimate, and that neither they nor Queen Victoria had any valid right to the Crown of England ! As the Americans might say, Mrs. Ryves had said a mouthful !

But though this fantastic claim only reached a court of law in 1866, this was by no means the first occasion on which it had been put forward. In the Waterloo year Lavinia Ryves's mother, Mrs. Olivia Serres (or de Serres), first received the startling news of her august parentage, it was alleged, from the contents of a mysterious sealed package delivered to her by the Earl of Warwick. In another version she declared that the good news was brought by the ghost of the Earl's father. Two years later, in 1817, she had decided to acquaint the world with her relationship to the late Duke Henry Frederick, a relationship which she was satisfied to believe at first was a left-handed one, but which grew more definite and legitimate the more she thought about it.

This lady, who later styled herself the Princess Olive of Cumberland, was born in 1772, plain Olivia Wilmot, the daughter, in fact, of Robert Wilmot, a house-painter of Warwick, and of his wife Anne Maria. Her father's family claimed descent (some considerable descent in point of worldly fortune !) from that Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, who was friend and favourite of Charles II. Shortly after his daughter's birth her father moved to London, but Olive spent much of her time as a young girl under the care of her uncle, Dr. James Wilmot, a fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, who was later presented to the small College living of Barton-on-Heath, in Warwickshire. From the very first she seems to have been a young lady of lively imagination, very anxious to dramatise herself as the heroine and central figure of romance. She first emerges into the limelight in connection with a burglary at her uncle's house when, largely on her testimony, two unfortunate wretches

were convicted and, according to the barbarous law of the time, executed for house-breaking. Olive bore testimony at the prosecution to her own incredible and thrilling heroism on that occasion. When nineteen years of age she became engaged to her drawing-master, John Thomas Serres, whose friends tried to dissuade him from the match. But Olive seems to have had her share of good looks and a certain sprightliness and charm, and her lover hurried home from his studies abroad to marry her. Dr. Wilmot performed the ceremony. In view of the absurd claims which she later put forward, it is worth noting that Robert Wilmot—the girl being a minor—made an affidavit that he was her natural and lawful father and consented to the marriage.

Serres was son of Count Dominic Serres; one of the founders of the Royal Academy. Both father and son were known at court and held successively the appointments of marine painter to the King. The younger man was appointed also marine draughtsman to the Admiralty, a snug position which yielded him one hundred pounds a month and a small vessel for his own personal use. He had contrived to amass a modest fortune, when his wife's extravagance and her fantastic claims drove him from the royal favour and landed him finally in a debtor's prison. It is hardly surprising that in 1804 husband and wife agreed to separate.

Olivia was undoubtedly a woman of versatile talents. After the separation she appears to have supported herself and her two daughters for a time by giving lessons in art. As a painter she also acquired some reputation, and several of her canvases were hung by the Academy. It was not difficult for the wife of an artist who was *persona grata* at Court to obtain for herself an introduction to the royal family, and in 1806 she was appointed landscape painter to the Prince of Wales. It must have been borne in upon her every day that it is a wise child who gets born a prince or princess. Undoubtedly it was her close connection with royalty at this time which set her wondering whether she could not do for herself what



nature had failed to do for her. Vague plans began to form in her mind for the improvement of her own family tree. We find her writing to the Prince of Wales, importuning that royal bankrupt for money, while at the same time hinting that she controlled mysterious resources and might lend him the sum of twenty thousand pounds. It is charitable and probably correct to suppose that she was beginning to be the victim of delusions. To what extent she believed in her own fabrications it is impossible to say. Certainly she was never held to be insane.

Literature seemed to offer more outlet to her romantic imagination than painting. She produced a novel and some poems, both without merit, and a dissertation "for the advantage of the young" upon the Athanasian Creed! But her only production of any importance (though not from the literary standpoint) was a Memoir of her uncle, Dr. Wilmot, after his death in 1808. This unassuming cleric she magnified into a person of enormous social and political importance, and roundly, without a shred of evidence that was not derisory, asserted him to be the author of the famous Letters of Junius.

By 1817 Mrs. Serres had made sure enough of her royal blood to present a petition to King George III in which she declared herself to be the illegitimate daughter of the Duke of Cumberland and Strathearn and of a Mrs. Payne, wife of a Captain in the Navy, and sister to Dr. Wilmot. Had she contented herself with this, the royal family might have been inclined to regard her with benevolence—perhaps even to the extent of making her an allowance. For the reputation of Henry Frederick was well known both to his royal brother and to the world at large. He was a man of dissolute and profligate life, whose amours were everywhere notorious, whose high birth had not even been able to save him from figuring in a scandalous divorce case, where heavy damages were given against him. Olive Serres had chosen her father shrewdly if not well. But her taste for picturesque invention had grown by what it fed on. For three years she elaborated



her story in silence, not daring to put forward the new version until the death of the Duke of Kent and George III silenced the two men whose single word would have blown sky-high the whole edifice of forgery and fraud. In 1820 she was free of these embarrassing witnesses and once again she claimed the limelight. Her mother, meantime, had become the daughter, instead of the married sister, of Dr. Wilmot, the liaison was, metamorphosed into lawful and holy matrimony, and thereby hung another romantic tale.

For it now appeared that the worthy doctor, who had passed in the eyes of the world and of his Oxford college as a bachelor, and whom Olive herself in her "Junius" memoir had specifically declared to be unmarried, had been, in fact, romantically wedded to the sister of no less a person than King Stanislaus of Poland. In another version this lady appears as the daughter, for Mrs. Serres was always a little doubtful of her family's relationships. Here is the account given by the *British Luminary*, a newspaper which had espoused the cause of the soi-disant Princess of Cumberland. It is quoted in a sarcastic notice in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1822, which reflects the general view of the lady's claims.

"Dr. Wilmot . . . was a high-spirited, independent character of great talent, and the friend and favourite of many of the young nobility then at Oxford. Stanislaus, afterwards King of Poland, was at that time studying at Oxford, and Dr. Wilmot became intimate with him. Stanislaus had a sister living with him (Princess Poniatouski), a very beautiful young creature ; and from the intimacy which subsisted between the prince and the doctor, he was frequently in company with the young princess ; a mutual attachment took place between them ; but the princess was not rich ; and they were at length privately married. Only a few confidential friends were acquainted with the transaction, for had it been generally known, the doctor would have lost his fellowship and his other high pretensions.

"In due time the princess presented Dr. Wilmot with a

daughter. Some family and political matters separated the parties for a while. He doted upon his lovely child, who, we believe, was placed under the care of Mrs. Payne, the sister of the doctor and the wife of Captain Payne."

This "beloved and interesting child . . . grew up the beautiful image of her mother, with a mind as superior as her person, and at the age of eighteen the Duke of Cumberland and the Earl of Warwick became her admirers ; at length the earl gave way to the duke, and on March 4th, 1767, they were married by Dr. Wilmot at the house of his friend Lord Archer, in the presence of Lord Brook (afterwards Lord Warwick) and Mr. Addez, which was known only to a few persons about the court.

"The apparently happy Duke and his lovely bride lived in hopes that they should soon be allowed to make their marriage public ; but in the year 1771 a transaction took place which proved a cruel death-blow to the young Duchess, for she never recovered from the effect . . . !!!

"Young, amiable and beautiful, and tenderly attached to the Duke, she took leave of him and went to Warwick in a state of misery not to be described. A premature birth at seven months was the consequence. On Tuesday, April 3rd, 1772, she gave birth to the Princess Olive, at the house of Mrs. Wilmot, in Jury Street, in the town of Warwick. The Earl of Warwick and Dr. Wilmot were both present, which fact is confirmed by their separate affidavits.

"The unfortunate Duchess was conveyed to France in a state scarcely to be described, where she afterwards died in a convent of a broken heart."

Such was the story of beauty in distress by which Mrs. Serres's journalistic supporter no doubt brought tears to the eyes of his gentle readers. It will be noticed that neither date nor place is given for the marriage of Dr. Wilmot with his Polish princess. The "transaction" so delicately hinted at was nothing less than the marriage of His Royal Highness of Cumberland to Mrs. Anne Horton, already dealt with. Yet

Mrs. Serres asked the world to believe that the King, knowing that the union was bigamous on account of the Duke's previous marriage, was so tender of his brother's reputation, that he commanded the little Princess Olive, who had been baptised already in private by her grandfather, Dr. Wilmot, to be re-baptised as the daughter of Robert Wilmot, the Warwick house-painter, whose wife had given birth to a child, alleged still-born, some few days before ! It was asserted that this order, given to Lords Chatham and Warwick, was carried out by the accommodating Dr. Wilmot, who stipulated only that the proceedings should be solemnly certified by the King and other witnesses in order to safeguard the child's future claim. The order was given in writing, it was alleged, on a scrap of paper, and ran as follows :

“ April four, 1772.

“ G.R.

“ Whereas it is our Royal will that Olive our niece be baptised Olive Wilmot to operate during our Royal pleasure.

“ To Lord Chatham.”

King George III indeed must have concerned himself greatly about his niece, according to that lady's allegation, made when everyone who could have confirmed or refuted her statements was safely dead and buried. There is another certificate by which Lord Chatham bound himself to pay her the yearly sum of £500 “ until a more suitable provision is made for her. Acting by command of His Majesty . . . ” A third purported to create “ Olive of Cumberland, Duchess of Lancaster,” and to allow her to assume the title and arms of Lancaster at the King's death. And, still more to the point, a will was “ discovered ” by which the King bequeathed to the said Olive the useful sum of £15,000 “ as a recompense for the misfortunes she may have known through her father.”

It seems incredible that Olivia Serres could have found

people ready to believe her story, which was expressly disavowed by her own husband. Yet she secured supporters. The *British Luminary*, already quoted, became her official organ, and a genealogist of rather doubtful reputation, Henry Nugent Bell, was said to have been impressed by her claim. In 1821 she caused herself to be re-baptised as Olive, daughter of the Duke of Cumberland and of Olive his wife, which, being her third experience of the sacrament according to her own account, should surely have secured her spiritual if not her temporal future. She acquired a carriage on which she mounted the royal arms, and drove about attended by flunkeys dressed in the royal livery. Her splendour was short-lived, for in the same year her extravagance led to her arrest for debt, when she tried unsuccessfully to raise the plea of royal privilege. Following her failure to prove her claim to the £15,000 alleged to have been bequeathed to her by George III, her claim was brought before the House of Commons by Sir Gerald Noel, and disposed of by Sir Robert Peel in a short but convincing speech. Two years later her husband died in the rules of King's Bench. The discredited princess outlived him for nine years of struggle and poverty, during which she never ceased to maintain and elaborate her claims. In 1834 she died, also within the rules of King's Bench.

It might have been supposed that the last had been heard of the matter, but Olivia Serres had left behind her two daughters, the elder of whom, Lavinia Ryves, immediately assumed the style and title of the Princess Lavinia of Cumberland. And ten years later, her mother's staunch champion, Sir Gerald Noel, once more became active, forming a committee to re-open the subject. By this time George IV was dead and Queen Victoria upon the throne. A Bill was therefore filed against the Duke of Wellington as an executor of the late king, praying for an account of the much disputed legacy of £15,000. We are not surprised to learn that the claim was not upheld, the Court of Chancery deciding that, as the will



had not been proved in the ordinary fashion, they had no power of action.

For several years the claim again remained in abeyance, while Lavinia Ryves, brooding over the distinguished visitors who had at one time frequented her home, no doubt contrived to convince herself the more certainly of her mother's honesty and of her own illustrious descent. For in 1858 she also took the field in print with the publication of an "Appeal for Royalty; a Letter to Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, from Lavinia, Princess of Cumberland and Duchess of Lancaster." As in this publication she put forward the story of the marriage of George III and Hannah Lightfoot, it is hardly surprising that her then reigning Majesty does not seem to have received or responded to her "cousin's" appeal with any enthusiasm. Indeed, it seems to have been ignored. No mention is made of Mrs. Ryves or her claims in any of Queen Victoria's published correspondence. But, with the obstinacy of advancing years, she clung the more tenaciously to her fantastic story and, as already stated, in 1866 the matter came to be threshed out and finally disposed of by the law courts.

And now a curious point emerges. The claims of Lavinia Ryves were contradictory and self-stultifying. If her mother had been, as she claimed, the legitimate daughter of the Duke of Cumberland, then her marriage to John Thomas Serres, a commoner, without the King's specific consent, was invalid, under the Royal Marriages Act. Olive Wilmot was born before the passing of the Act and was therefore, assuming her claims to be true, a princess of the royal blood. It follows that her daughter Lavinia, the petitioner, would be in that case herself illegitimate and so barred from her mother's title and inheritance. Foreseeing this difficulty, Mrs. Ryves had astutely taken advantage of the Legitimacy Declaration Act of 1861 to have her parents' marriage declared valid and her own legitimacy established in the courts that year. She had, of course, taken care on that

occasion not to mention her mother's exalted rank and lineage. There was, therefore, nothing suspicious in the circumstance, nothing but a daughter's praiseworthy desire to establish her mother's position and her own legitimacy in an age when marriage certificates were apt to be a trifle casual. The Attorney-General had himself been cited in the case and raised no objection to the petition. But Mrs. Ryves and her son, though shrewd, were not shrewd enough. They had failed to realise, as the Attorney-General pointed out at the trial, that a declaration of this sort, if obtained by a fraud upon the court, was so much waste paper.

When, therefore, the case of Ryves and Ryves *v.* the Attorney-General came up for hearing, it was decided to concentrate first on the first half of the claim, that the mother of the elder petitioner was the legitimate daughter of Henry Frederick Duke of Cumberland. The judges appointed to hear the case were Lord Chief Justice Cockburn, Lord Chief Baron Pollock, and the Judge Ordinary, Sir James Wilde, assisted by a special jury. For Mrs. Ryves and her son appeared Mr. J. Walter Smith and Mr. D. M. Thomas, and opposing them, in formidable array, the Attorney-General, the Solicitor-General, the Queen's Advocate, Mr. Hannen, and Mr. R. Bourke for the Attorney-General.

Never, it must have seemed, did petitioner come into court with a better accredited story. There were certificates and documents, generally in triplicate, to buttress up every point of the recital. Seventy documents, dramatically declared the lady's counsel, would be produced, attested by 43 signatures of Dr. Wilmot, 16 of Lord Chatham, 12 of Dunning, 12 of George III, 32 of Lord Warwick and 18 of the Duke of Kent, the father of the Queen. "What an ingenious mode of keeping State secrets!" as Mr. Thoms admiringly remarks in his amusing article on Dr. Wilmot's Polish Princess. As the case progressed it was found that all these certificates had strangely enough, two attributes in common. All were written on small scraps of paper. ("He was very fond of scraps,"

observed Mrs. Ryves ingenuously of the Duke of Kent!) with nothing in the least official or formal about them, even when King George was divesting himself of the Duchy of Lancaster, and not one of those scraps of paper showed a watermark! The Attorney-General, Sir Roundel Palmer, made it clear from the start that he would treat the claim "as a case of fraud, fabrication and imposture from beginning to end. It is comfortable to believe," he added charitably, "that the guilt of the fraud may be excused or palliated by the insanity of one of the persons principally concerned."

Petitioners' case was opened by a statement of the marriage of Dr. Wilmot with the Polish Princess Poniatowski, but it appeared that the worthy doctor, who would write out a marriage certificate for other people on the least provocation, had somehow omitted to leave any written record of the date or place of his own wedding. Mr. Thoms, in his article, has examined the whole question of this mythical princess. He quotes Polish authority to prove that Count Poniatowski, afterwards King of Poland, had only two sisters, who were definitely and satisfactorily married elsewhere. Nor could the lady have been his daughter, as stated in the Appeal for Royalty. King Stanislaus was born in 1732. "The favourite of Catherine was no doubt a remarkable man," observes Mr. Thoms dryly, "but he must have been a very remarkable man indeed if he was the father of a marriageable daughter in 1749." Moreover Stanislaus was not in England until five years later than the date given by Mrs. Serres for his sister's marriage, and the monarchy of Poland being elective, that sister, supposing she existed, would not have been a princess at that date. The truth is that the Polish Princess was a pure figment of Olive Serres' active and imaginative brain. While you are inventing a mother, why not invent a grandmother as well? Grandmothers are so respectable. The only wonder is that she should have boggled at providing for these ancestresses the *dossiers* which she provided so freely for herself. But at any rate, when the Princess's daughter



came to woman's estate, her existence was amply vouched for by her marriage certificate, which was the first exhibit laid before the court at Westminster.

"The marriage of the underwritten parties was duly solemnised according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England, at Thomas Lord Archer's house, London, March the 4th, 1767, by myself.—'J. Wilmot.'" Follow the signatures "Henry Frederick" and "Olive Wilmot." Present at the marriage of these parties, "Brook," "J. Addez"—attested before "J. Dunning," "Chatham." This certificate was in duplicate.

The next exhibit was the written order, already reproduced, for the re-baptism of the Duke of Cumberland's daughter, by the name of Olive Wilmot, and the other provisions referred to, made for the financial well-being of the infant princess. Then came the sensation of the case. Certificates were produced purporting to prove the marriage between George III, when Prince of Wales, and Hannah Lightfoot, the ceremony being performed by Dr. Wilmot, who must have been looked upon as something of an expert, in the presence of W. Pitt and Anne Taylor. To make assurance doubly sure, the marriage, it appeared, was twice solemnized, once in Kew Chapel, and once "at their residence in Peckham." The first certificate is signed by His Royal Highness as "George P," the second, strangely enough, as "George Guelph," which must surely have been an innovation in royal signatures. Reference was further made to a will in favour of Olive Wilmot, dated 1762 (after the date of George III's public marriage to Queen Charlotte), bearing the signature "Hannah Regina" and attested by "W. Pitt."

This story of George III and the "fair Quaker," which was so persistently circulated after his death, seems never to have been mentioned during his lifetime, and with every telling it discovered new and contradictory features. Here is Mr. Thoms' amusing summing-up. "Once upon a time there was a fair Quaker whose name was Hannah Lightfoot.



No, Anna Eleanor Lightfoot. No, Whitefoot. No, Wheeler.

“ Well, never mind what her name was ; her father was a shoemaker, who lived near Execution Dock. No, he was a linen draper and lived at St. James’s Market. No, that was her uncle.

“ But these are mere trifles. She no doubt had a name and lived somewhere.

“ Well, the Prince saw her as he went from Leicester House to St. James’s. No, that’s wrong ; it was as he went to the Opera. No . . . it was as he went to the Parliament House. Never mind where he saw her ; he did see her and fell in love with her, and, as neither his mother, the Princess Dowager, nor Lord Bute looked after him, and he was nearly sixteen years old, he married her in 1754 ! No, that’s not right ; it was in 1759.

“ But it does not matter when he married. He did marry her at Keith Chapel in Mayfair. No, it was at Peckham. No, it was at Kew.

“ No, that’s all a mistake. Her royal lover never married her. Isaac Axford married her and left her at the chapel door, and never saw her after that. Yes, he did ! they lived together for three or four weeks, and then she was carried away secretly ‘ in a carriage and four ’ and he never saw her after that.

“ Wrong again. It was the King from whom she was so strangely spirited away, and he was distracted, and sent Lord Chatham in disguise to hunt for her, yet he could never find her.

“ No, that’s all wrong. It was Axford who couldn’t find her, who petitioned the King to give him back his wife at St. James’s. No, that was at Weymouth. No, it was on his knees in St. James’s Park as directed. . . .”

It is difficult to believe that there is the least substratum of truth in this incoherent and contradictory story, especially taken in conjunction with the known character of King

George III. "Young, bigoted, chaste," Walpole describes him at the time of this supposed wedding or liaison, and if there had been the least suggestion of a scandal, certainly Horace would have nosed it out. There is no more evidence for the existence of the fair Quaker than for Dr. Wilmot's Polish Princess, and it is more than probable that the whole story originated in the same fertile brain. From an article in the *Monthly Magazine*, it is certain that Mrs. Olive Serres was mixed up in the story as early as 1824, and she almost certainly had a hand in two scandalous publications which circulated it—"The Secret History of the Court of England," published anonymously and retailed furtively at a guinea the volume, and the "Authentic Records of the Court of England, by Lady Anne Hamilton," which was not the production of the lady whose name it bears. In addition to the certificates already quoted, another was put in evidence later on at the trial, from the tireless pen of Dr. Wilmot. "I hereby certify that George Prince of Wales married Hannah Wheeler *alias* Lightfoot, April 17th, 1759, but from finding the latter to be her right name, I solemnised the union of the said parties a second time May 27th, 1759."

According to the author of the *Authentic Record*, the Queen herself knew of the secret marriage and insisted upon going through a second ceremony with George III after the death of Miss Lightfoot in 1765. This took place at Kew Palace under the guise of an evening entertainment. Needless to add that the officiating clergyman was once again the very serviceable Dr. Wilmot. The King's brother Edward was present on this occasion, as he had been upon the two previous ones. The certificates of this alleged royal marriage produced in the Ryves case were actually written upon the back of the certificate of the Duke of Cumberland's marriage with Olive Wilmot. It is plain, as the Lord Chief Justice pointed out in his summing-up, that this was intended as direct intimidation. George IV was to be made to understand that, if he refused to recognise the claims of the Princess Olive,

it would be pushed forward nevertheless and at the same time she would have no alternative but to publish to the world the fact of his father's secret marriage, which must automatically illegitimate him.

However, these certificates were ruled out as evidence, and the case went on, smothered in an avalanche of documents, so that it seemed as though certain august and illustrious persons must have passed every moment of their leisure industriously making records of secret events. A handwriting expert was called by the petitioners to identify the signatures with others known to be genuine, but this Mr. Netherclift—hard pressed by the defence, which pointed out constant dissimilarities in the formation of letters—was by turns obstinate and wavering, and finally broke down in his attitude and repudiated signatures which he had been brought into court to prove.

Nothing daunted by this breakdown, Mrs. Ryves herself next went into the witness-box, a resolute, tireless old lady, ready, as she told the court, to stand for ever to protect the honour of her family. She gave evidence of her life with her mother after the separation between her parents. There were pleasant memories of Brighton, where she and her mother went by invitation to the balls given by the Prince Regent at the Castle Tavern, where they were presented to His Royal Highness by ladies of rank and title. The Prince on one occasion had given her five pounds to buy a doll. Lord Warwick was an old friend and distant connection by marriage of the family, whom they treated as a relative. The Duke of Kent was a constant visitor from 1805 until his death. She remembered a visit in 1815, when the Duke received her mother with more than his usual kindness and said to her, "Lord Warwick had communicated to me that you are a relative of my own. I have often been struck with your resemblance to the royal family, and now it is accounted for." Lord Warwick undertook to produce "the proofs," but was too hard up to make the necessary journey to Warwick Castle.

Her mother provided the money—she had often helped the earl before. He returned with a sealed packet of papers, which he handed over in the presence of the Duke of Kent. There were three sets of papers : one originally in the charge of Lord Chatham, another of Dr. Wilmot, and a third which had always been in his own possession. One packet, marked “ Not to be opened till after the King’s death, ” was left sealed until 1819, the others were opened and read aloud in the presence of the Duke of Kent, who expressed himself satisfied that the signatures were genuine. His Royal Highness then proposed to take upon himself the guardianship of her mother and herself, whom he recognised as the legitimate descendants of the Duke of Cumberland. He had made them an allowance of £400 a year for four or five years before his death. He had bequeathed her mother ten thousand pounds and one-third of his property in Canada. Also he confided to “ his cousin, the Princess Olive of Cumberland,” the guardianship of his daughter (later Queen Victoria) a charge which her mother did not take up out of consideration for the feelings of the Duchess of Kent. After the death of the Duke they were visited by the Duke of Sussex, who also made a careful examination, together with other witnesses, of all the papers and declared them to be genuine.

When pressed as to the inconsistencies and contradictions that appeared in her own and her mother’s different statements, Mrs. Ryves was constantly forced to admit that mistakes had been made. She did not hesitate to uphold her mother’s statement that the secret of her birth had been first revealed to her by the ghost of Lord Warwick’s father. Her examination lasted three days, and all the time she gave her evidence, we are told by an eye-witness, in a firm and decided manner, only occasionally pleading her years as an excuse for some slip of memory.

During the course of the trial another claim emerged from documents put in in evidence, which was beyond the jurisdiction of the court, but an interesting pendant to the major



one. Mrs. Ryves and her mother before her were not only the rightful heirs to the throne of England, but to that of Poland also, which was to be a sort of consolation prize should her own country turn down her petition! In proof there is the usual letter of Dr. Wilmot, dated 1791 :

“ MY DEAR OLIVE,

“ As the undoubted heir of Augustus King of Poland, your rights will find aid of the Sovereigns [*sic*] that you are allied to by blood should the family of your father act unjustly. . . . The Princess of Poland, your grandmother, I made my lawful wife, and I do solemnly attest that you are the last of that illustrious blood. May the Almighty guide you to all your distinctions of birth. Mine has been a life of trial but not of crime !

“ J. WILMOT.”

On the strength of this letter and others similar in tone, Mrs. Serres, the granddaughter of that Polish Princess who, it will be remembered, married before her father had reached his eighteenth year, issued a manifesto. It was addressed “to the great powers, principalities and potentates of the brave Polish nation, calling upon them to rally round the Princess Olive, granddaughter of Stanislaus, and informing them that her legitimacy as Princess of Cumberland also has been proved.” It does not appear, however, that either Mrs. Serres or her daughter attempted to push the claim in Stanislaus’ own country, where the mythical Princess Poniatowski would have received short shrift.

All documents having been laid before the court and all evidence given for the petitioner, the Attorney-General rose to reply in a devastating speech. Point by point he tore the claim to pieces, pointing out how it had been presented by the original claimant in three distinct forms that were varied to suit the political requirements of the times. At each modification new sets of documents had been produced for

inspection. At every point the claim was self-contradictory and palpably fraudulent. As for the certificates, apart from the evidence of petitioners' own expert witness, which had completely broken down, the internal evidence proved that they were the most ridiculous, absurd, preposterous series of forgeries that the perverted ingenuity of man ever invented. He pointed out how, in her two "Junius" pamphlets, Mrs. Serres had given minute criticisms of the imitation of handwriting and signatures which showed how closely she had studied the subject, which had well prepared her for her future acts.

At this point the Attorney-General was interrupted by the foreman of the jury, to say that they were unanimously of opinion that there was no necessity to hear any further evidence, as they were convinced, from handling the documents themselves, apart from expert evidence, that the signatures were not genuine.

Thus, even before the summing-up of the Lord Chief Justice, it was evident that there could be but one possible verdict. The jury found that they were not satisfied that Olive Serres, the mother of Mrs. Ryves, was the legitimate daughter of Henry Frederick Duke of Cumberland and Olive his wife.

Had the case gone further, the Attorney-General was prepared to prove that Dr. Wilmot was actually at Oxford when he was alleged to be performing the ceremony of marriage in London. A later examination of all the documents and comparison with other published papers showed that Lord Chatham also had a knack of being in a totally different place when he was supposed to be present as witness of the various ceremonies. The trial was rather like the proverbial breaking of a butterfly on the wheel, so flimsy and ephemeral was the claim of Olive Serres and her daughter when it came up for examination in the glaring light of fact and reason. Yet the story had found supporters for close on sixty years. And even now the scandal of George III and Hannah Lightfoot is whispered in the back alleys of court history.

Mrs. Ryves made another bid for vindication in her pamphlet "*Ryves v. the Attorney-General: Was Justice Done?*" That was the final flicker. The "sovereigns" of England and Poland remained unmoved in the succession. Mrs. Ryves herself lived on for another five years, enjoying a pension from the Royal Academy in consideration of her father's eminence as a painter. On December 7th, 1871, she died at Haverstock Hill, leaving behind her two sons and three daughters, who were content to live in comfortable obscurity.

XVII

LOVE AND THE CROWN IN OUR DAY

“I’d crowns resign  
To call thee mine.”

—Popular Ballad.

THE Germans are a romantically-minded people, and their princes, so far as I have been able to trace, were the first to think it worth while sacrificing a crown, or the chance of one, for a woman. And even among them, we have to wait till nearly our own day for an instance of the sort. The will to power was much stronger among our ancestors than in us. The mere pleasure of ruling apparently far outweighed the terrific responsibilities, the dangers and not infrequently the hardships attached to kingship in mediæval times. Nowadays a crown does not always seem a great prize. Even so, the Germans must be allowed the credit of the discovery.

The middle of the nineteenth century in Europe might not improperly be called the Coburg epoch. The Treaty of Vienna left that almost unknown princely family in the possession of a tiny duchy, smaller than most English counties; at the outbreak of the Crimean War a Coburg was seated on the throne of Belgium, Coburgs were married to the Queens of England and Portugal and to the daughters of Louis Philip; at the end of the century children of those princes were reigning over Great Britain, Belgium, Bulgaria and Portugal. The rise of the family dates from the marriage of Leopold of Coburg, afterwards Leopold I of Belgium, to Charlotte, daughter of George IV, and of his widowed sister, the Countess of Leiningen,



to the Duke of Kent. Ferdinand, Leopold's brother, did not marry a royal personage, but he married very well. His wife, the daughter of Prince Kohary, was the richest heiress in Hungary. In 1836 their son, also named Ferdinand, married Maria da Gloria, the Queen of Portugal, then in her eighteenth year, four years before his cousin Albert married Victoria.

With the youth and early manhood of Ferdinand we are hardly concerned here. Upon the birth of his first son, Pedro, he acquired the style and title of King-Consort. Like Albert, he had at first to contend against the suspicion and ill-will of his wife's subjects; unlike Albert, he had to withstand the shocks of ever-recurring insurrections and violent constitutional changes. At any rate, he helped his by no means brilliant wife to hold on to her shaky throne, which she left upon her death in 1853 to their sixteen-year-old son, Pedro V. Ferdinand assumed the regency amid general applause. The Coburg prince was in fact no longer a foreigner. He had not stirred out of the kingdom for twenty years past, and under the Portuguese sun he had ripened into a true southerner. The artist king, his people called him, and were glad to observe in him many of the artist's foibles. He had lost all his old stiffness; was affable, pleasure-loving, and luxurious. He exerted himself to embellish the capital, made parks, and laid out public walks. He bought the ancient monastery of the Pena, on the jagged heights above Cintra, and built that beautiful palace which at first sight most beholders take to be the authentic creation of the ages of knight-errantry. To console the people of Lisbon for the conversion of the bull-fight into an innocent exhibition of dexterity and skill, he built the Maria Segunda theatre.

Ferdinand had in fact earned such a high reputation for kingship that when Otto of Bavaria lost the crown of Greece, he was invited to take it. He had had a lot of experience of revolutions and knew better than any man how to run a state on an empty treasury. Old King Leopold, always eager

for the aggrandisement of his family, urged him to take it. He "even went so far as to say that the beauty of the Levantine women was known to be very great."

Among the artist's foibles mentioned just now, Ferdinand's penchant for women was well known. His married life does not appear to have been disturbed by any scandals; but left a widower at the age of thirty-seven, he was free to indulge his passion. The bait of the Grecian women did not, however, lure him. Politely but resolutely he declined the offered crown. His excuse was that he knew better than to trust himself to British diplomacy in a foreign land, and that his place was behind his son's throne. But that was not the real or at any rate the only reason.

Ferdinand knew that upon ascending a throne he would be expected as a matter of course to marry again and found a dynasty. And this he did not choose to do because he was very much in love with another woman, a woman whom he would not have been allowed to make his queen.

The woman was Elise Frederica Hensler, the daughter of an Austrian tailor (some say a shoemaker) long settled in Boston. She was actually born in Vienna on May 22nd, 1836, but somebody calls her the first of the American prima donnas. When the King-Father first saw her she was playing the page Oscar in Verdi's opera "Un Ballo in Maschera," at the San Carlos theatre at Lisbon. Her black eyes and her graceful limbs delighted him as much, perhaps, as her voice. She was then about twenty-three years old, endowed with the artist's temperament and the artist's gift of tongues. From her Ferdinand perhaps picked up that odd American-like accent which some people remarked in him. It was soon known in Lisbon that she had accepted His Majesty's protection.

In the early sixties, no one seems to have dreamed that Ferdinand had refused the crown of Greece because he would not slight his opera singer. People did not act like that outside the pages of novels, and besides—if he did take a new

and princely consort, what was there to hinder him keeping a mistress too? The peculiarity of the Coburg prince's attitude was only to be made clear seven years later.

In September, 1868, upon the expulsion of Isabel II, the throne of Spain became vacant. There had been a great deal of talk about the unification of the Iberian peninsula in the forties and fifties of that century, and it was now decided that the best successor to the Bourbons was to be found in the Portuguese royal family. Marshal Prim, who was at the head of the provisional Government of Spain, after conferring with his colleagues, Sagasta, Figuerola and Zorilla, despatched a prominent political journalist, Fernandez de los Rios, to offer the crown, informally, to King Ferdinand.

The envoy has left us a minute and interesting account of his mission. Secrecy having been enjoined upon him, he put up at the most out of the way hotel he could find in Lisbon, and on January 17th, 1869, wrote thence to a grandee of the Portuguese court, the Marquis de Niza, announcing that he wished to present to him a letter of introduction from a mutual friend.

This struck the marquis as mysterious, so he appointed his own back garden for the place of rendezvous. The letter of introduction was from Marshal Prim. "That's all right," said the marquis, "I have already taken steps to secure you an audience with King Luiz." "But I don't want to see King Luiz," explained the Spaniard, "my business is with his father." "With Dom Ferdinand!" The Portuguese was astonished—he had supposed that Prim favoured the young king. However, he promised to do what he could to help the ambassador.

On the morning of the 19th, the two gentlemen drove out to Cintra, and at Lawrence's Hotel, the marquis penned a letter to Ferdinand, soliciting the privilege of an interview on a matter of the utmost importance. Having toiled up the steep path leading to the Pena palace, they came upon a group of the royal gardeners. Niza enquired for one of them whom



Princess Catherine Dolgoruky in 1879.





he knew. The man, however, had left the service, but a lad was discovered who, for a liberal tip, undertook to carry a message from the marquis to one of Dom Ferdinand's body servants. Within a quarter of an hour this man appeared, and promised to hand the letter to his master. Presently he returned and told Niza to follow him.

Fernandez de los Rios waited outside the castle, probably too sensible of the gravity of his mission to appreciate the lovely prospect. Another quarter of an hour passed, and then the marquis reappeared, making signs to him to follow him into a coppice near by. "In a short space of time, there appeared, coming down the path a tall, well-formed man, clad in a jacket and green velvet breeches, high riding-boots, and a black broad-brimmed hat—looking exactly like one of Vandyck's characters; his complexion was red and white, his face a little drawn, his features regular and well proportioned, his forehead smooth, his eyes dark, his glance mild, his beard and moustache red but flecked with grey, his countenance generally not very expressive, his manner simple but dignified, his movements agile. This man of fifty-two had, in short, the appearance of a man of thirty-five or forty."

Ferdinand, it appears, on having been acquainted by the marquis with the nature of the Castillian's errand, had at first refused to receive him, saying that any such proposal must be made publicly and that even then he would never agree to it. Besides, he supported the candidature of the Duc de Montpensier for the vacant throne. On this account, he hesitated to read the letter from Prim which De Los Rios handed him. He listened to the envoy's arguments with the nervous smile he often wore. It was a case of conscience, he persisted; nothing would induce him to accept the crown of Spain. And he walked away. The marquis suggested to the discomfited Spaniard that in speaking of a case of conscience, His Majesty had in view the possible candidature not of Montpensier but his own son.

That might have been so. He might also have been

thinking at the moment of that nephew Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern, whose candidature was soon after put forward with such far-reaching consequences to Europe. But already, no doubt, he was thinking of his mistress. Montpensier getting wind of these intrigues, is alleged to have pointed out to Mlle Hensler that she might be cast aside if her royal lover should be persuaded to accept the crown of a foreign country. We can have no doubt, therefore, what sort of advice she gave. Montpensier, it is alleged, went further. He approached the Papal Nuncio at Lisbon, reminding him that the King-father's relations with the opera singer were a public scandal. The churchman found himself obliged to address a remonstrance to the royal sinner. Nothing loth, King Ferdinand promptly married the Boston tailor's daughter in the chapel of the Bemfica palace, on June 10th, 1869. On the same day, Duke Ernest conferred on the bride the title of Countess of Edla in the peerage of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha.

The Portuguese court was shocked, as Montpensier hoped the Spaniards would be. Queen Maria Pia, like other virtuous women, had married a man she did not know, for the sake of his crown; she was naturally disgusted when a woman who had given herself to the man she loved for no settled price was presently rewarded by him with a wedding ring and a lifelong contract. These transactions, in commercial phrase, knock the bottom out of the matrimonial market and tend to ruin marriage as a trade. Maria Pia promptly turned her back on the wife of her husband's father, and the courtiers obediently did the same. The men no doubt agreed with the professional wives that Ferdinand had set a bad example; they might be expected to marry their mistresses next, perhaps without a dowry.

"However, the King's father could not be excluded from court functions, and wherever he went he took his wife with him. On the occasion of some festival, the countess found herself waiting in an ante-chamber with a crowd of diplomats, functionaries and courtiers. When the doors were thrown

open, no one offered an arm to King Ferdinand's wife. Seeing this, the Spanish ambassador politely offered his escort, and led the lady into the hall. Every seat was occupied, according to instructions issued overnight. The Portuguese snobs stuck fast to their seats and grinned. The ambassador motioned to his wife, who at once surrendered her seat to the countess; whereupon, to make the insult still more marked, a number of courtiers sprang to their feet and offered their places to Her Spanish Excellency. It is soothing to remember that the queen who is said to have planned this contemptible trick was herself badly snubbed at certain courts on account of her father's (Victor Emmanuel II's) spoliation of the Church."

It was supposed, among others by Ferdinand himself, that his second marriage would render him quite ineligible for the vacant throne. "All for love and the world well lost," he may have chuckled. But trouble caused between France and Prussia by the unfortunate candidature of the Hohenzollern prince made men direct their eyes once more upon him. Napoleon III urged him to withdraw his refusal. The Spanish Ambassador in Paris telegraphed that in the Portuguese candidature, the powers would see a way out of the peril which threatened Europe. An intimation by Ferdinand that he would accept the crown of Spain would have relieved the French Government from the necessity, real or imagined, of demanding fresh guarantees from Prussia against the renewal of the Hohenzollern candidature.

On the very day that Benedetti approached King William at Ems with a demand for guarantees, Ferdinand admitted De los Rios to a conference at the Necesidades palace. Whether he was in earnest or not, he was too late to preserve the peace of Europe. On July 19th, 1870, Napoleon's declaration of war was handed in at Berlin.

The Spaniards, whose right to select a king was thus in principle challenged, shrugged their shoulders and continued their negotiations with Ferdinand. It is evident that His Majesty was not serious. He made all sorts of stipulations,



some of them impossible for any government to grant. That the Countess of Edla must be treated on all except official occasions as his consort, Prim promised readily enough. Probably the Countess herself did not trust to this assurance. Since her husband had laid it down as one of his conditions that the two crowns should never be worn by one of his existing children, he would sooner or later be jockeyed into a state marriage in order to provide heirs for his new kingdom. It was that dread, I have no doubt, which led Ferdinand finally to break off negotiations on August 14th.

This marriage of a king with a commoner, though so little known to the retailers of romantic court gossip had, therefore, consequences farther reaching than any I know of in history. Had Ferdinand accepted the Spanish crown when it was first offered, the Franco-German war might have been postponed for years and had, not inconceivably, a different result. We do not hear that the responsibility weighed upon the King-father. The autumn of his days was calm and golden. "He filled his palaces with things rare and beautiful, ransacked Europe for choice bric-à-brac, armour, and antique furniture. Through him many thousands of pounds must have been transferred from the pockets of the Portuguese taxpayer into the coffers of Wardour Street. While he played the Mæcenas, his wife played the lady bountiful. The spell which she had thrown around him never waned. Next to exhibiting his collections, the old virtuoso loved to talk of the beauty and wisdom of his wife, in season and out of season, to all and sundry, proclaiming her supreme excellence.

"We catch a glimpse of the happy pair in the year 1877. General Grant, travelling round the world, made a call at Lisbon, and was introduced to King Ferdinand, then a stately old gentleman past sixty. The general was then presented to the Countess of Edla, who expressed her pleasure at meeting so distinguished a countryman. She considered the country of her father's adoption her own. She exhibited her husband's treasures to the distinguished strangers, on whom she made

a most agreeable impression. Later on, General Grant and his wife took tea at Cintra, and tasted the excellent teacake which, the Countess explained, she had made herself—an assurance which satisfied Mrs. Grant that the ex-opera singer must be a virtuous woman. Probably the artist king was not sorry to part with a visitor with whom he must have had very little in common."

When Ferdinand died in December, 1885, he left a considerable fortune to his wife, including the Pena palace, and recommended her in his will to the kindness of his children. What became of the Countess of Edla, I have been unable, many enquiries notwithstanding, to discover. The Pena palace, evidently, she sold or leased to the royal family. It was certainly in their occupation as far back as 1896. The Countess of Edla's name appears in the Almanac de Gotha for 1925, by which time she had entered on her ninetieth year.

The world had to wait nineteen years for another prince to forfeit his chance of a throne for a woman. The chance, it is true, was not quite so good as the one Ferdinand threw away, for it was only a second son's. The prince was Oscar Carl August, next brother of the present King of Sweden and second son of King Oscar II and his pious queen Sophia. The lady was Ebba Henriette Munck, the daughter of a colonel in the Swedish army. She was a good-looking young woman, thirty years of age, highly accomplished, especially as a singer and musician. Oscar, who was a year younger than she, met her while she was acting as maid of honour to his sister-in-law, the Crown Princess.

Having discovered that they loved each other, the Prince proposed to marry her. Probably the match did not seem to him alarmingly unequal. There had been only three lives between him and Bernadotte's father, the postillion, to whom Ebba's great-grandfather might have tossed a franc and an admonition to "Gee up"; for the Muncks were a good family of German origin but allied to the ancient Swedish house of Cederstrom. But into the respective pedigrees Oscar II would

not enter. Miss Munck was no fit mate for one who might wear the crown—for Gustaf at that time had no children. After the manner of stern parents all the world over, he forbade his son to think of her any more ; and sent him on to Paris to pursue his art studies, no doubt regarding the reputedly gay city as the best cure for romantic love.

Ebba, meanwhile, threw up her appointment at court, and went in for nursing the poor at a big hospital in Stockholm. This was exactly what was expected of a love-lorn heroine in the 'eighties. More than one of William Black's nicest girls did the same. And her prince obstinately refused to succumb to the wiles of the Parisiennes, but came back as devoted to his Ebba as ever. The King seems to have had the support of his people who, like most other peoples, regarded inter-marriage with one of themselves the lowest form of degradation to which a royal personage could stoop ; but the lovers had an extremely powerful ally in the person of Her Majesty, Queen Sophia, a lady of pronounced evangelical views and a patroness of the Salvation Army. She was all for honest love and simple faith, and being herself a German princess with a pedigree dating back to the Age of Bronze, privately thought, no doubt, the match a good enough one for a Bernadotte, anyway. The King, too, believed in virtue, respectability and religion as a general thing, and she had him, therefore, at an unfair advantage. Presently she became very ill. Thereupon His Majesty capitulated. His son could marry Miss Munck only if he would renounce for himself and any potential children all claim whatsoever to the crown of Sweden and his princely rank and dignities. Perhaps the King hoped that the young man would think the price of love too high. No. Oscar signed away his birthright without a tremor.

The sacrifice meant a good deal more than forgoing a merely contingent claim. He forfeited, at the same time, his emoluments as a member of the royal family and was further threatened with the loss of his pay as a naval officer. The income remaining to him was estimated by a London paper

at only £270 a year. It may have been the readiness of Ebba Munck to marry him under these changed conditions that caused public sympathy to veer sharply round in favour of the lovers. Here certainly was a case of "all for love and the world well lost."

Whether by desire of the King or not, it was decided that the marriage should take place out of Sweden. The Queen announced that she was going to Bournemouth for the benefit of her health. Her son and his betrothed travelled with her. In *The Times* of March 2nd, 1888, we read that the Rev. A. S. Bennett, of St. Stephen's, Bournemouth, having been asked to allow his church to be used for the celebration of the marriage according to the Swedish rite, had applied for instructions to his ordinary, the Bishop of Winchester, who replied in a favourable sense. Just at this moment, the German Emperor died. Oscar, though he was now cut off from the royal caste, was asked to postpone the wedding. But the arrangements had proceeded too far. The marriage was recorded civilly at the Christchurch register office, then, on March 15th, at half-past twelve on a mild spring morning, was solemnised at St. Stephen's. The Queen of Sweden was there, also Oscar's younger brother, Prince Carl. His father, we must assume, had somewhat relented, for he pleaded the Emperor's health as an excuse for his absence and directed Count Piper to represent him. The papers mention the Duchess of Albany, the Crown Princess of Denmark, and a host of English titled people as present, so the bridal pair must have begun to hope that they were not after all to be cast into the outer darkness. In addition, naturally, everybody in Bournemouth who could beg or borrow an invitation had squeezed himself or, more often, herself, into the church, and those who were unsuccessful cloyed the approaches. After all, the chance actually to assist at the nuptials of Cinderella does not come more than once in a lifetime! And though there was no coach driven by enchanted white mice, there were quaint little ceremonies incidental to the Swedish marriage service (performed by one of the



Stockholm Court chaplains) which might have graced a wedding in fairyland. The Prince, dressed in blue as a commander in the Swedish navy, wore his sword on entering the church—this was unbuckled by his brother as he took the bride's hand, and was buckled on again as he turned from the altar. The bride wore a crown of myrtle over her veil. She and the groom exchanged rings. Decidedly a most romantic marriage, which must have satisfied the fancy of the most romantically-minded girl in Bournemouth.

After lunching with their guests at Craghead, the married pair went off to Bonchurch, in the Isle of Wight, for the first part of their honeymoon. Then they went to Paris. Subsequently they made their home at Karlskrona, the Swedish Portsmouth, where Prince Bernadotte, as he was now called, took up some kind of naval appointment at first, as his sire had sternly decreed, without pay.

History knows them no more. But an examination of the *Graflisches Taschebuch* for 1922, issued at Gotha, satisfies me that the lot of these brave lovers has not been too harsh a one. They live at Vingåker, a pleasant town near Lake Hjelmars. They are known as the Count and Countess of Wisborg—Oscar holds, in addition, the rank of a retired admiral in his brother's navy. They have two sons—one of them a lieutenant in the Guard, with a child of his own—and three daughters, one of whom has followed the lead given by her mother and is a nurse at the Sophiahjelm, Stockholm. Queen Sophia died some years ago. I cannot suppose that in disposing of her fortune, she forgot her second son, or that King Gustaf has ceased to regard him as a brother.

But of all royal houses, the most addicted to marriage outside the royal stock has been the Habsburgs. The example was given, long before Marie Louise, by an Archduke Ferdinand son of the emperor of that name, who in the sixteenth century married Philippine Welser, the daughter of a wealthy merchant of Augsburg. He dwelt with her in that ugly castle of Ambras, to which you are persuaded to go from Innsbrück. Glancing

at her portrait, you will wonder whether this could have been a love match. In our own time the Emperor Francis Joseph looked on the misalliances of his family as almost a worse affliction than the bloody tragedies which swept away his brother, his wife, and his son. The most romantic of these unions was that of the Archduke Johann Salvator, who in October, 1889, formally relinquished all his princely rights and status and married a chorus girl named Milly Stubel at a London register office. Assuming the name of Johann Orth, he bought a small steamer and sailed away in it with his bride. Their honeymoon was brief. They touched at Buenos Aires, and neither ship nor crew was ever heard of again, though Francis Joseph sent a warship to search the seas for some trace of his excommunicated kinsman.

His Imperial Majesty probably congratulated himself that Johann Salvator had at least perished with dignity. More distressing to the proud sovereign must have been the escapade of Archduke Leopold. He also fell in love with a chorus girl, Wilhelmine Adamovitsch by name, but no misalliance was apprehended here, as the young lady professed to disdain marriage and believed in free love. Upon consideration, however, she decided there was much to be said for the more permanent arrangement. There was another renunciation; and Leopold only brought to his bride the humble name, bestowed by the Emperor, of Herr Wulfling. The pair retired to Switzerland, and from the democratic, proceeded by rapid stages to the simple life. The Wulflings took to the woods, where their uncouth appearance spread alarm among the school children. Wilhelmine, alas, proved no more faithful to the simple life than to free love. With such emancipated people, divorce was easy. Herr Wulfling got a new wife, a more sedate person, became a naturalised Switzer, and lived for a while at Bern. At the present day he is to be found keeping a provision shop in a suburb of Vienna, where he personally deals out quantities of butter and slices of sausage to his humble customers.

Then there was the Archduchess Stephanie, widow of the ill-fated Crown Prince Rudolf, who consoled herself for her first husband's infidelity and the heartless behaviour of her father, Leopold of Belgium, by marriage with Count Lonyay. Her daughter followed her example, and became the wife of Prince Windischgraetz—a marriage which has not turned out happily.

None of these princes or princesses stood in the direct line of succession to the imperial throne and the old Kaiser might regard their backsliding with a certain equanimity. But enormous was his indignation when, in the year 1900, his nephew and heir, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, sought permission to marry Countess Sophie Chotek de Chotkowa and Wegnin, a Bohemian lady then thirty-two years of age. This time, it was thought, leave would be absolutely refused her or, on the contrary, that an exception would be made and the Countess be invested with royal status. Instead of which, in spite of the representations of the Prime Minister, Dr. von Körber, His Majesty allowed his heir to marry, on condition that he absolutely renounced all imperial and royal rights on behalf of his wife and any children that should be born to them. This seems the unwisest course that could possibly have been taken. If Francis Ferdinand had succeeded to the throne, he must have remained officially a bachelor throughout his reign ; the Emperor's children would have been nobodies and the Emperor's nephew his heir. Hungary, it has been alleged, would not have recognised the renunciation, and the Archduke's wife would have been regarded there as Queen ; but I think we must assume old Francis Joseph to have understood the law of both his realms and to have provided against such a contingency.

The marriage took place at Vienna, in June, 1900. The Kaiser avoided his heir's wife as much as he could, but she succeeded in disarming his hostility if she did not win his favour. At all events, he raised her to the rank of Duchess of Hohenberg and conferred on her the title of Highness. The

marriage was in all respects a happy one. On the whole, the Duchess was more popular abroad than at home, where her ambition was suspected and she was accused of stinginess. The German Emperor paid her particular honour and attention, perhaps because her husband and he were united in policy. Possibly, if Francis Ferdinand had ascended the throne, some way might have been found of evading that formidable act of renunciation ; but on June 28th, 1914, Archduke and Duchess alike perished at the hands of the Serbian assassins at Sarajevo. The two sons of the marriage are living in Vienna, and must smile ironically, one would imagine, at the elaborate provisions to exclude them from the heritage of a vanished empire. Their lot is presumably better than that of their kinsman, little Otto, who is denied access to his native country because the succession resides in him.

Czar Alexander II's love for the beautiful Princess Dolguruki has been sympathetically told by M. Paléologue. The attachment began with a chance meeting in the summer gardens by the Neva, while both were very young. It lasted throughout life, till the Czar was blown to pieces by the bombs of the Nihilists in 1881. Katharine Mikhaelovna Dolguruki was not in love with the sovereign, but the man. But it was not till July 18th, 1880, immediately after the death of his consort Marie, that the autocrat was able to make the woman he had so long loved his wife and to bestow rank and dignities on their children.

**THE END**







